

PLAIN REASONS

FOR A

Religious, Conscientious and Peaceable
SEPARATION from the Communion
of the Church of *England*, as by Law
Established :

BEING A

LETTER

Humbly presented to all sober and well-
disposed Persons :

Wherein is shewn,

- I. The good Order and Constitution of the
Baptist Churches; and divers Objections
answered.
- II. The just Cause of the Baptists Separation from
the Church of *England*, demonstrated and
vindicated; and the chief Arguments of Mr.
Ozwen's pretended Lawfulness of Infant Bap-
tism, and other Objections, consider'd and
disprov'd.

By JOHN TASKER.

Jer. vi. 16. *Ask for the old Paths, where is the good Way,
and walk therein.*

Chap. xv. 9. *Let them return unto thee, but return not
thou unto them.*

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T O T H E

Christian R E A D E R.

IT was the Desire of some Friends, rather than my own Inclination, that mov'd me to undertake this Work, the Design of which is, to shew the Reasonableness of the Baptists Separation from the present Church of England, as by Law Etablised; and that it might plainly appear to all our kind Neighbours, who do not willingly entertain Prejudice against us, that we are really what we pretend to be, a conscientious People, that do not act out of any Desire of vain Glory, nor from a turbulent or seditious Principle, but in the Fear of God, and desirous, if possible, to live peaceably with all Men.

It may be proper to acquaint you, that Mr. Owen, Vicar of Iford, in Suffex, having published a Book, entitled, *The Lawfulness of Infant Baptism*, which some People in those Parts have boasted of, as supposing it to be unanswerable; has occasioned some particular Notice to be taken thereof in this Work.

He seems to be a Writer full of Assurance; and when I had read and consider'd his Book, I could hardly forbear drawing up of a full Answer; but considering it has now been published about seven Years, it may seem needless, however in this Discourse; and especially for that the most part of his Arguments are the old Ones (tho' somewhat new modell'd) which have been answered over and over by many of the Baptist Perswasion.

I am sorry to find Mr. Owen so causelessly taking Offence, and calling the Candor and Ingenuity of Dr. Gale into Question^a, for saying, "Too great a part of the Clergy, 'tis notorious, are either

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"open

^a Owen's Preface, p. 4, 5.

“ open Nonjuring Jacobites, or secret, and therefore more mischievous Highflyers, &c.

Mr. Owen should have considered, that Dr. Gale is expressly arguing against such jumbling of Distinct Parties together as he is offended at, and thinks it a great Abuse. He would not have the Church of England charged with the blasphemous Fancies of her pretended Sons, and has expos'd some of their popish Doctrine, particularly naming the Persons. Now that which was so notorious, and which he was able to give plain Instances of, should not be charged, or slighted (as Mr. Owen words it) as the stale Crimination of Men who judge the Heart, contrary to clear Facts and Demonstrations.

‘Tis pity our Author dealt so unfairly with Dr. Gale, as to leave out such material Passages as are before, and immediately follow what he has cited, that he might take an Occasion to expose him. The Words going before are, “ ‘Twould be shameful Injustice to make the Church answerable for all the strange, nay, sometimes blasphemous and atheistical Fancies, and bad Actions of her pretended Sons.” Then follows what Mr. Owen has cited; Doctor Gale adds, “ But to ascribe the Disloyalties, Corruptions, and pernicious Doctrines of these Men to the Church, though they have had the Fortune to worm themselves into some share of her Dignities, would be disingenious, and every honest Man would abhor it^b ”. Was it then ingenious in Mr. Owen to suggest, That Dr. Gale reputes them among the Body of the Clergy, and of the Church, when he is expressly clearing the Church of these her bad Sons, to the Intent he might also on like Grounds, clear his own Party, from the Freaks and Perswasions of a single Man, or a very few Persons, Mr. Wall had heard of, and was willing to charge on the whole Body?

Again, Mr. Owen is mightily offended with Dr. Gale and his Party, and compares our Case to that of the Danites, who had taken away Micah's Gods, to whom the injured Man cries out, — What have I more? And what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee? Judg. xviii. 23. “ Much alike (says he) is our Case. For all Pædobaptists throughout the World are only unchurch'd by the charitable Mr. Gale and his Party. — What aileth us now, that we cry after him? Why are we not wonderful calm, and kind to these Dissenting Brethren, and give up such cheap Things, as our Church Ministry, &c. for Peace and Civility's sake? This Thanks has the Government, to be quite unchurch'd for its gracious Indulgence^c!

Indeed such Spirits as Mr. Owen here seems to discover, I believe, would soon strip us of this gracious Indulgence; and we
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^b Dr. Gale's Reflections, p. 52. ^c Owen's Pref. p. 6, 7.

P R E F A C E.



Bless God, the Government is not in such Hands: But otherwise, what is there in this mighty Out-cry?

It is to be noted, that Dr. Gale was answering Mr. Wall, who supposes the Baptists to be right in their Notions about Baptism, and their Church to be in the Error; and yet undertakes to shew, that the Baptists have notwithstanding, no sufficient Ground to separate; because, as he supposes, the Difference is not about Fundamentals. To which the Doctor replies, among other Things, "That if it were not "in Reality a Fundamental, yet while we believe it is, it has the "Influence of one upon our Consciences, and we have the same Reason to separate^d.

'Tis plain therefore the Stress of Dr. Gale's Argument lies in this, That 'tis contrary to our Consciences to join with the Church of England as with the true Church, while we retain our Opinion in the Point of Baptism: But this we must give up as a Trifle, if we would give Satisfaction to these Men; otherwise we are followed with a great Out-cry, That we have robb'd them of Ordinations, Ministers, Sacraments, Church and Church-Membership. But hath not Mr. Owen the same Opinion of his Church as we have of ours, viz. That 'tis the true Church of Christ? And if so, would he disclaim it to join with ours, which 'tis like he thinks is a false one? If not, how can he blame us for not joining with them? But if he will allow the Baptists to be in the right, and that their Church is in the Error (which was the Topic Mr. Wall argu'd upon, and to which Dr. Gale answered) then is he still more unreasonable, if he don't leave us the Propriety, and renounce that Claim to which he has no Right. However, all we desire or demand of them, is only to suffer us quietly to enjoy the Liberty of our Consciences, and the Toleration which our kind Legislators have granted us; and the same Liberty we very freely allow to them. And what Occasion there is to cry out of Robbery, &c. unless to such as envy the gracious Indulgence we enjoy, and would incense the Government against an innocent People, I see not.

And that Mr. Owen is not clear of this Temper, appears but too evident, in his strange and unaccountable Reflection on these Words of Dr. Gale, "That the Dissenters by being out of the Body of the "Church of England, are meerly on that Account, out of her Power." "Into the Merits of the Cause (saith Mr. Owen) we "must not examine, but the bare Act of Withdrawing, without any "Consideration of Right, is sufficient. Then, if in this Respect all "other Societies are like our Church, and our Church like them, the "King's Subjects need but withdraw from his Allegiance, and form "themselves into little separate Bodies, in Cities, Towns, and

"Conn-

^d See Dr. Gale's Reflections, p. 77, 78, &c.

“ Country Villages too, as Dissenters have acted towards our Church,
 “ and they are meerly on that Account out of the Civil Body, and
 “ certainly out of its Power. So the Preston Gentlemen withdrew,
 “ and were executed, not for Rebels, but for Fools; because they
 “ knew not how to plead their own Privilege^e.

What Examination is this which our Author means the Church should have Power to call the Dissenters to? Is it not to be presented, and prosecuted in the Spiritual Courts, contrary to the Toleration and gracious Indulgence granted to them? For 'tis in this Respect Dr. Gale is to be understood, that we are out of the Power of the persecuting Party of the Church. And why should Mr. Owen compare the Power of such a Party, to the Power of the Legislator, unless because he would have it so? But sure the Legislative Power extends not only to the Church, in maintaining its Rights and Privileges, but also to the Dissenters, in a gracious Indulgence and Toleration, by which they are exempted from the Power and Persecutions of their inveterate Adversaries, who reckon themselves the only Sons of the Church. And that this was all which Dr. Gale intended, may appear to those who will be at the Pains of reading the Passage referr'd to below^f.

What then but Prejudice and Ill-will could put our Author upon drawing such Inferences contrary to the Premises? Which he improves with all his Power, to lessen the Credit of his Antagonist, instead of fairly answering his Arguments.

But I will trace this Matter no further, the Doctor is out of the Reach of Envy, and the Truth which he maintain'd will not be batter'd down by such ungenerous Methods, which tend to banter Men out of their Opinions, rather than convince their Judgments.

As for our Parts, we shall choose rather to suffer Reproach, than in the least to be guilty of rendering Evil for Evil, or Railing for Railing; and knowing that these Things enter not into the Merit of the Cause, I shall pass them over not only as weak and frivolous in point of Argument, but also as hurtful and injurious to our real Design, which is to promote the Honour of God and Religion; and Peace, Concord, Charity, good Affection, and mutual Forbearance, among all the differing Denominations of Christians; being desirous to observe that golden Rule of our Saviour, To do to others as we would they should do unto us.

Vale.

* Owen's Pref. p. 7, 8. ^f Dr. Gale's Reflect. p. 84, 85, 86,



To all sober and well-disposed

PERSONS;

Particularly such as join in

COMMUNION

WITH THE

Church of England.

SIRS,



HE great Author of the Christian Religion, and of our Common Salvation assures us, that the Consequence of his Coming would be to set a Man at Variance against his Father, and the Daughter against her Mother, the Daughter in Law against her Mother in Law; and that a Man's Foes should be they of his own House: And withal, that he who loveth Father or Mother, Son or Daughter, Wife or Children, &c. more than him, is not worthy of him^s. And as it is he by whom God the Father now speaks to Men, who is the great Prophet and King, and the Lord and Master of all Christians, to whom we all owe an entire Subjection and Obedience^h; it must needs

^s Mat. x. 35, 36, 37. Comp. Luke 14. 26.

^h Heb. i. 2. Acts iii. 22. Mat. xxiii. 8, 10.

needs appear highly reasonable and necessary, for all Persons that have a due Value for that honourable Title which we all generally claim, I mean that of *Christian*, to acquaint themselves with the Rules and Laws of Christ, as the same are contain'd in our Canon, and only Rule of Faith, the holy Scriptures.

We readily agree to what your Church teaches in her sixth Article, that *holy Scripture containeth all Things necessary for Salvation: So that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any Man, that it should be believed as an Article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to Salvation.*

Hence it follows, that every Christian ought diligently to search the Scriptureⁱ, as well the Laity or common People, as others, and not to depend upon any who are esteemed Guides of Religion. We have a general Exhortation, to prove all Things, and hold fast that which is good^k; which supposes an Ability in all those to whom it is given to judge for themselves, to try every Spirit, and by the Exercise of their own Senses^l to discern both Good and Evil: And that whatever they shall find agreeable to the Mind of Christ, they are to conform themselves to; and to reject whatever wants his Authority, though it have never so many and great Patrons besides; well knowing, that 'tis in vain to worship God by Mens Traditions.

“ In this the true Liberty consists, that every Man be
 “ allow'd the full and free Exercise of his own Faculties,
 “ and without any Discouragements or Restraints, to embrace and defend whatever he takes for Truth; and to
 “ worship God according to the Dictates of his own Conscience only. And this (as Dr. Gale observes) the wise,
 “ the learned, the best and greatest of all Parties, do now
 “ agree to plead for, and acknowledge the indubitable
 “ Right every Man has to this Liberty, which they are
 “ therefore as ready to grant to all others, as they are to demand it for themselves^m.

Being then thus far agreed, I shall now endeavour to shew you, that the Churches of the Baptists are constituted more agreeable to the Canon of holy Scripture, than is the present Church of *England* her self: And that therefore, in the second Place, our Separation from her Communion is just and necessary.

This

ⁱ John v. 39. Acts xvii. 11. ^k 1 Thes. v. 21. ^l Heb. v. ult;

^m Gale's *Serms.* Vol. I. p. 23, 24.

This may possibly seem strange to many conscientious and well disposed Persons in your Church, who being not well acquainted with the real Principles, and primitive Truth which the Baptists maintain and practise, are prepossess'd with false Notions and Opinions concerning us; which may be occasioned by Misrepresentations of ignorant and prejudic'd Persons, who *Speak Evil of the Things they understand not.* 'Tis no new Thing however, to find innocent Persons reproached and vilified, and the *Way of Truth evil spoken of*ⁿ. This therefore doth not startle us in the least, but is rather a Confirmation to us, that we follow the same Way and Truth which Christ and his Apostles did who were thus handled; for Christ himself teaches us, *The Servant is not greater than the Lord*^o. Therefore we have no Reason to expect better Treatment than he met with. But now to come to the Point; I am first to shew, That the Constitution of our Churches are agreeable to the Rule of holy Scripture. And this will appear in the following Particulars.

First, *The Gathering of our Churches is according to the Doctrine of our Saviour and his Apostles.*

Our Saviour commanded his Apostles to go into all Nations, and preach the Gospel to every Creature, as their first Work; and those who were thus taught, *i. e.* who having heard the Gospel preached, did believe, were to be baptized, and no other. For this is plainly the Order of the great Commission of our Lord, which is the only Authority the Ministers of Christ have to baptize *in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*^p. And this Order the Apostles did truly observe, for they admitted none to Baptism but such as were first taught, and made a Profession of such Qualifications as were required, namely, Repentance and Faith. Thus when St. Peter preached to the Jews, he said, *Repent and be baptized every one of you*; which they readily embraced, and being under Conviction for that heinous Sin, in crucifying the Lord of Glory, they rejoiced to find a Remedy, and *they that gladly received his Word, were baptized.* So when the Samaritans believed Philip, *preaching the Things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both Men and Women.* And when the Ethiopian Eunuch desired to be

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ⁿ Mat. xii. 24. Acts xvii. 18. xxiv. 5. xxviii. 22. 2 Pet. ii. 2.
^o John xv. 20. ^p Mat. xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 15.

To Plain Reasons for a Separation

baptized, *Philip* tells him, *If thou believest with all thine Heart thou mayst*⁹. The Jailer also who was baptized rejoiced, believing in God with all his House. And *Crispus*, the chief Ruler of the Synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his House: And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed, and were baptized^r.

Now as this was the Order observed by the Apostles, so it is well known that this is the Practice of the Baptists at this Day; and herein they are justified by your selves, who say in your Church Catechism, that *Repentance and Faith are required of Persons to be baptized*.

Secondly, "Our Church Constitution is according to the primitive Pattern. They only can be truly constituted that are rightly gathered, which we conceive the baptized Churches only are.

1. "In the primitive Constitution of Christ's Church, the Members held a free Fellowship, there was no worldly Force used in begetting Members, or holding them together in Church-Fellowship; but their Fellowship was from their own free Choice, and by a mutual Consent^r.

"And in this we succeed the first Churches; for we have no penal Laws to force People to our Communion, nor ever desire to have. We are for no Constraint but the Power of God's Word and Spirit to perswade poor Sinners to embrace Christ, and eternal Life by him, in a sure Way of his own prescribing. We think it very hard that any should be forced by Fines, Imprisonment, Banishment, or Fear of Death, to be of our Religion, whether they can believe it to be true or no. Besides, if we should take that Course, it is without Warrant from Christ or his Apostles^t;" nay, we think, contrary to what our Saviour taught, when sending out his twelve Apostles he saith, *Behold, I send you forth as Sheep in the midst of Wolves*: And when some of them were commanding Fire to come down from Heaven, to consume the Samaritans (after the Example of *Elias*) because they did not receive their Lord, he rebukes them, saying, *Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of*^v.

2. "The

⁹ Acts ii. 38, 41. viii. 12, 37. ^r Chap. xvi. 34. xviii. 8. ^t John i. 11, 12, 13. Acts ii. 41, 42, 43. ⁱ Thes. i. 5, 6, 9. ⁱ John i. 3. Rev. xxii. 17. ^t *Jos. Hooke's Apology*, p. 76, 77. ^v Mat. x. 16. Luke ix. 55.

2. " The good Constitution, and primitive Order of the baptized Churches, consists further in the disposing of the Members to those Places to which they are fitted to serve in this mystical Body, that so the Church may be Organized with Officers: And here we shall shew that we are not without a Ministry that is of divine Authority, and who have a regular Call, and Ordination to the ministerial Office. And,

(1.) " We have three Sorts of ordained Officers amongst us, viz. Messengers, Elders, and Deacons, which we find to have been in the first Churches. That the first Churches had an Order of Ministers called Apostles or Angels, which in plain *English* are Messengers, besides the chief Apostles (*i. e.* the Twelve and St. Paul, who had an extraordinary Call to the Office of Apostleship) is evident.

" *Barnabas* was one of this Order; for though St. Paul, who was ordain'd together with him, had an extraordinary Mission from Christ Jesus himself, it does not appear that *Barnabas* had so too; yet he is called an Apostle in Conjunction with Paul^w.

" *Softhenes*, none of the twelve Apostles, is joined with Paul, and with him to be accounted a Minister of Christ, and a Steward of the Mysteries of God, and an Apostle^x.

" *Sylvanus* and *Timotheus*, it seems, were Ministers of this Order, as is very plain, 1 *Thes.* i. 8. compared with *Chap.* ii. 6.^y And St. Paul calls *Epaphroditus* his Brother and Companion in Labour, and the Churches Messenger^z. And he speaks of some Ministers chosen by the Churches to travel with him, which he styles the Messengers of the Churches, and the Glory of Christ^a.

The Business of Messengers was to preach the Gospel in remote Places, plant Churches, ordain Elders, and set in order Things that were wanting, every where in all Churches. Such a Care had St. Paul, who with *Barnabas* was sent forth in this Service^b; and who left *Titus* in *Crete* for the same Purpose^c.

" Now this Order, or Office of Messengers is still maintain'd in the baptized Churches; and as there is need of such a Ministry to the World's End, so some

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" should

^w Acts xiv. 14. ^x 1 Cor. i. 1. iv. 1, 9. ^y Hooke's *Apol.* p. 78.
^z Phil. ii. 25. ^a 2 Cor. viii. 18, 19, 23. ^b 1 Cor. xi. 34. 2 Cor. xi. 28. Acts xiii. 2, 3. xiv. 22, 23, 25, 26. ^c Tit. i. 5.

“ should be set now as well as formerly, for the Defence
 “ of the Gospel, against Gainfayers, in all Places^d. And
 “ what other Officers but these, are bound to travel up
 “ and down the World to do such a Work as that^e?

Doubtless it will be granted, such Work is yet to be done for Christ in the World; and if so, there must be some sure who stand peculiarly engag'd to do it; and then why may they not be called by a Name suitable to their Work? especially since, as has been observ'd, 'tis a Name formerly made use of by the Apostles themselves.

The first Churches had also an Order of Ministers called Elders, which were fixed Ministers, and had a Charge and Care of particular Churches and Congregations, as may appear from St. Paul's Words to the Elders of *Ephesus*, where he exhorts them thus, *Take heed to your selves, and to all the Flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers, to feed the Flock of God, &c.* Likewise St. Peter exhorts Elders to feed the Flock of God which was among them, taking the Oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready Mind; neither as being Lords over God's Heritage, but being *Ensamples to the Flock*^f.

Now this Office of Elders is religiously maintained in the Baptist Churches. Again,

The primitive Churches had a Sort of Ministers called Deacons, whose Work was to serve Tables, or take Care of the Poor, to see that their Wants were timely relieved: The first Appointment of this Office we find *Acts* vi. And their Qualifications are mentioned *1 Tim.* iii. 8 — 13. Which useful Office is likewise still maintained in the baptized Churches. Thus much as to the Kinds of Officers.

(2.) “ True Ordination of these several Officers is also
 “ found in the baptized Churches.

1st. “ Because we have true Baptism.

2^{dly}. “ Due Election of Officers.

3^{dly}. “ The true Form or Order of Ordination.

1st. “ It is most certain that we have true Baptism, because we have all the Essentials of Baptism. 1. A right Subject. 2. Right Matter. 3. Right Words. 4. A right Manner. Inasmuch that such as oppose us cannot
 “ chuse but confess, that ours is true Baptism; though
 “ we

^d Phil. i. 17. ¹ Tim. i. 3, 4. ^e Hooke's *Apol.* p. 80. ^f Acts xx. 28.
¹ Pet. v. 1, 2, 3.

" we cannot believe that theirs is right as well as ours,
" and there we differ.

" Now Baptism precedes Ordination, and where there
" is no true Baptism, there can be no right Ordination.

And as we have true Baptism, so after Baptism we lay
Hands on all the new admitted Members, as the fourth
Principle of Christ's Doctrine, according to the Apostles
Practice ^g.

2dly. " We have due Election of Officers; none are or-
" dain'd to Office among us before they be chosen by the
" free Consent of the whole Church, or at least of the
" major part. And thus it was in the primitive Church,
" When they were to choose an Apostle in the Room of
" Judas, the whole Church were one Hundred and twen-
" ty, and they appointed two^h, and left it to the Lord,
" which of the two should take part in that Ministry.
" And good reason it is, where all are equally concern'd,
" they should be equally satisfy'd in the Choice of such
" to whom they commit the Care of their Souls. And
" when Deacons were to be ordained, the Apostles did not
" deprive the People of a Liberty of Choice, only told
" them how such Officers should be qualified, and so left
" it to the People to choose them, and then they ordin-
" ed themⁱ.

" And we have not only Scripture, but Antiquity also
" on our side in this Case.

" The Nicene Council thus; *If so be they seem to be worthy,*
" *and the People shall choose them*^k.

Cyprian thus; *The People have Power of themselves, either to*
choose worthy Bishops, or else to refuse them that be unworthy^l.

" And they were counted worthy in those Days that
" were qualified according to the Directions of the Apostle
" Paul, 1 Tim. iii. Tit. i. tho' they had taken no School
" Degrees; for Clement writing to the Corinthians, saith,
" *They made Trial of them by the Spirit to be Bishops and Dea-*
" *cons.* And Salmasius saith, *Several Lay Men were chosen to*
" *be Presbyters and Bishops, without being promoted through infe-*
" *rior Orders; and that Custom continued long in the Church.*
" Thus Ambrose at Milan, Nestarius at Constantinople, &c.
" *who had been brought up in civil Employments.*

" Now this Privilege, though lost, or utterly neglected
" by some others, is carefully maintained in our Churches,
" where

^g Acts viii. 17. xix. 6. Heb. vi. 2. ^h Acts i. 15, 23. ⁱ Acts vi. 3,
A. 5, 6. ^k Theod. L. I. c. 9. ^l See Jewel's Apol. Part II. p. 127.

“ where none are elected *Messengers, Bishops* or *Deacons*,
 “ without the free Choice of the Brotherhood where such
 “ Elections are made^m.

3^{dly}. “ The true Form or Order of Ordination is found
 “ in our Churches. For after due Election, we proceed to
 “ Ordination with Fasting, Prayer, and Laying on of
 “ Hands; and thus it was in the primitive Church. See
 “ *Acts* vi. 5, 6. xiii. 3. xiv. 23.

“ Now these ancient, apostolical Practices, are conscien-
 “ tiously observed, and religiously performed in our
 “ Churches, in godly Simplicity, without any additional
 “ Devices of our own or other Mens.

“ By all which it may appear, they are Chrst's lawful
 “ Ministers, that perform the ministerial Duties in our
 “ Churches, even such Ministers as are qualified, chosen,
 “ and ordained according to the Word of Godⁿ.” And
 this we find your Church approves^o.

We allow no Man to take upon himself the ministerial
 Office, but are of one Mind with the Church of *England* in
 her Twenty third Article, where she saith, *It is not lawful*
for any Man to take upon him the Office of publick Preaching, or
ministring the Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully
called, and sent to execute the same^p.

“ But this we do, we allow every faithful Brother
 “ amongst us; that hath an edifying Gift, to use the same
 “ to the Glory of God that gave it, and to the Profit of
 “ his Brethren; and we take our Warrant for so doing
 “ from such Scriptures as these, *1 Cor.* xii. 1, 7, 8, &c.
 “ *Chap.* xiv. 1, 12. *1 Pet.* iv. 10, 11. *As every Man hath re-*
 “ *ceived the Gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good*
 “ *Stewards of the manifold Grace of God.* But we do not al-
 “ low any to use their Gift, how or when they please, but
 “ so as comporteth with Decency, and makes no Breach
 “ upon Order, *1 Cor.* xiv. 26, 33, 39, 40.

“ To which I shall subjoin what is said in the fifth Ar-
 “ ticle of our Confession of Faith, as it is expressed in
 “ *Mr. Grantham's Book of primitive Christianity, viz.*

“ That such who first orderly come into Chrst's Church,
 “ and waiting there, attain to Degrees of Christianity,
 “ rightly qualified, and competently gifted by God's Spirit,
 “ ought to teach in the Church, and as Occasion serves,
 “ to preach to the World (being approved by the Church
 “ so

^m Hooke's *Apol.* p. 84, 85, 86, 87. ⁿ *Ibid.* p. 87. ^o *Catholick Do-*
ctrine, Art. 23. Prop. 6. p. 140. ^p *Ibid.* p. 131.

“ so to do) and that from among such some are to be
 “ chosen by the Church, and ordained by Fasting and
 “ Prayer, and Laying on of Hands, for the Work of the
 “ Ministry; such so Ordained we own as Ministers of the
 “ Gospel.

“ But all such as come not first to repent of their Sins,
 “ believe on the Lord Jesus, and be baptized in his
 “ Name, for Remission of Sins; but are only brought up
 “ in the Schools of human Learning, to the attaining hu-
 “ man Arts, and variety of Languages, with many vain
 “ Curiosities of Speech; seeking rather the Gain of large
 “ Revenues than the Gain to God, such we utterly deny;
 “ for they have need rather to be taught themselves, than
 “ fit to teach others, *Rom. ii. 21. 9.*

To this we may add this Witness of Antiquity.

Eusebius relates^r, that *Origen* withdrawing himself out
 of *Alexandria*, went to *Palestine*, and made his Abode in
Cæsarea; where the Bishops of those Parts intreated him,
 although he was not yet ordained Priest, to discourse and
 to expound the holy Scriptures publickly in the Church.
 And when *Demetrius* complain'd of it, saying, “ That this
 “ Thing was never heard of, nor done till this Time, that
 “ Laicks should preach in the Presence of Bishops;” he
 was answered by *Alexander* Bishop of *Jerusalem*, and *Theo-*
phylactus Bishop of *Cæsarea*, who thus wrote and excused *Origen*,
 (viz.) “ I know not how you came so apparently to mis-
 “ represent the Truth; for they are invited to preach
 “ to the People (when they are found fit to profit the
 “ Brethren) by the holy Bishops. For Example, *Eulpius*
 “ [was invited to preach] by *Neon* at *Laranda*: And so was
 “ *Paulinus* by *Celsus* at *Iconium*: And *Theodorus* by *Atticus* at
 “ *Synnada*, who were our blessed Brethren. And 'tis not
 “ incredible that the like was done in other Places, tho'
 “ we never knew it.

If yet it should be objected, That our Ministers being
 usually destitute of the Knowledge of the Tongues in
 which the Scriptures originally were written, and other
 Parts of Learning, are therefore in danger of wresting the
 Scriptures, as *2 Pet. iii. 16.*

Our Answer is, That *St. Peter*, by the *Unlearned* in that
 Text, does not mean such as had not the Knowledge of
 Tongues and Arts, because himself was such an unlearned
 Person, in the Opinion of those who were the Scholars
 and

^a *Hooke's Apol. p. 54, 55.* ^r *Euseb. Eccl. Hist. Lib. VI. Chap. 19.*

and Doctors of that Time^f, who notwithstanding their Wisdom and Attainments in human Literature, wanted the true Wisdom: *For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory^t*. Besides, it appears, that God for wise Reasons, has made Choice of the *foolish Things of the World to confound the wise*; and those Things which are *hid from the wise and prudent, he is pleased to reveal to Babes^v*.

So that let Men marvel never so much, and cry out with the Pharisees, *This People who knoweth not the Law are cursed^w*; we have still to reply, *The Foolishness of God is wiser than Men*; and *the Weakness of God is stronger than Men^x*.

Not that we therefore despise human Learning, or reject it, but highly value it when 'tis used as it ought, in subserviency to that which is Divine; but when it is exalted above it, and is made the chief, if not the only Qualification to fit Men for the Ministry, this we judge to be a great Abuse.

“ And as touching the divine Learning, though God has
 “ communicated it unto some Men by immediate Inspira-
 “ tion, *Job xxxii. 8. Isa. l. 4* and may do so when he
 “ pleases, and will never be wanting to true Believers,
 “ by the Aids of his Spirit to help their Infirmities, in a
 “ Time of need, *Luke xxi. 15*. Yet ordinarily, this holy
 “ Knowledge is not attain'd without diligent Study,
 “ *Eccles. xii. 9, 10. 2 Tim. ii. 15*. The holy Prophet
 “ Daniel, though God had given him Knowledge and
 “ Skill in all Learning and Wisdom, *Dan. i. 17*. yet he
 “ was conversant in Books, *I understood by Books*, saith he,
 “ *Dan. ix. 2*. He read in the Books of such as had writ-
 “ ten of divine Things before him, and by that Means he
 “ profited in divine Knowledge, and we may profit by
 “ the same Means.

“ We freely grant, that to study the Scriptures in their
 “ original Tongues, is a good Help to Divinity, though
 “ not enough to make a Man a Divine (as is observ'd
 “ before) and a Man may be a good Divine without
 “ it, though as a Help it should not be neglected where
 “ it can be gained. And as it may happen, there may be
 “ an absolute Necessity for this Knowledge; if the Tran-
 “ slations of holy Scripture should be burnt up (as some
 “ Men desire) they may be revived again from the origi-
 “ nal Tongues, by such as are Proficients in that kind of
 “ Learning.

But,

^f Acts iv. 13. ^t 1 Cor. ii. 6, 7, 8. ^v 1 Cor. i. Mat. xi. 25;
^w Isa. xxix. 14. John vii. 49. ^x 1 Cor. i. 25;

But, " I know no Man (saith Reverend Bishop Taylor) that says, that the Scriptures in Hebrew and Greek are easy, and certain to be understood, and that they are hard in Latin and English; the Difficulty is in the Thing, however it be express'd, the least is in the Language. If the original Languages were our Mother Tongue, Scripture is not much the easier to us; and a natural Greek or a Jew, can with no more Reason or Authority obtrude his Interpretations upon other Mens Consciences, than a Man of another Nation^y.

The Result of the whole is, that " when we have studied as much as we can, we shall never effectually attain to the Inside of the divine Learning without the Illuminations of the Spirit of God; see 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11. xii. 3. Eph. i. 17, 18. And this is attain'd by humble and constant Prayer, Luke xi. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. James i. 15. 'Tis true, I have heard some, pretending to this divine Learning (the more is the Pity) speak slightly of this Doctrine of receiving the Holy Spirit, but I thought it argued nothing more than that they were destitute of it themselves, and so consequently were none of Christ's Ministers, nor Members neither, Rom. viii. 9. I confess such a Man, by the Strength of natural Parts, and acquired Abilities, may have a literal Knowledge of the Scriptures, be acquainted with the received Doctrine, and popular Opinions of the Times, and may speak excellently about such Things, while he himself does not heartily believe what he declares to others, and there is a Reason at hand, even because he doth not surely know them, neither can he, till it be given him by the Spirit of God; see Mat. xiii. 11. 1 Cor. ii. 14^z.

Touching the Maintenance of Ministers, our Judgment is, that such as are set apart for that Employment, or who spend their Time in the Service of Christ and his Church, in sowing of spiritual Things, ought to reap their carnal Things; the Lord having ordained, that they which preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel^a; that is, that they should be allow'd that which is sufficient for the Support of themselves and their Families. But this must be a free and not a forced Allowance: The Minister of Christ must preach freely, not seeking worldly Gain, but as much as may be, to make the Gospel without Charge, after

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the

^y Polemic. Discourse, p. 974. as quoted by Hooke, Apol. p. 59, 62, 63.
^a 1 Cor. ix. 11, 14.
Hooke's Apol. p. 63.

the Example of St. Paul, who, though he had the Care of all the Churches upon him, yet his own *Hands ministred* to his own, and others *Necessities*^b. And on the other hand, the Church should take care, upon all reasonable Occasions, to give freely^c. But we cannot find that Gospel Ministers have any divine Right to Tithes, or any forced Maintenance; and therefore herein also, we conceive the Baptist Churches duly observing these Rules, are most agreeable to the primitive Practice.

If any of your Church further object, That all our Orders, and ministerial Offices, are invalid and void, for want of an orderly Succession from the Apostles; our Answer is: That in this Case we stand upon the same Foot with the Church of *England* her self; for we think she can no more prove any such Succession from the Apostles than the Baptists, unless she should derive it through all the impious, superstitious and idolatrous Practices of the Church and Popes of *Rome*; a Way which we are not fond of, and which Protestants have generally disclaim'd.

Thus the Author of the Book entitled, *The Rights of the Christian Church*, tells us, That the reformed Clergy had no Notion, that the Ministers of Christ must needs receive their Power successively from the Church of *Rome*: He says particularly, that *Luther* disavowed it, and disclaimed all popish Ordinations; and several others besides *Luther*^d.

But if an uninterrupted Succession be maintained, it must be supposed, that every Bishop ordains his Successor. Thus *David* left *Solomon* his Son sitting on his Throne, being anointed King before his Father's Death^e. So *Josua* succeeded *Moses*, being full of the Spirit of Wisdom; for *Moses* had laid his Hands upon him^f. By this Way (say the Papists) the apostolick Churches shew what Reputation they be of: As the Church of *Smyrna* telleth us of *Polycarp*, by John the Apostle placed there; the Church of the Romans telleth us of *Clement* ordained by *Peter*^g. Yet we do not understand that this is practised, either in the Church of *Rome*, or the Church of *England*; for the Bishop is always dead, or divested of his Office, before the next Bishop is ordained in his stead.

This Pretence of Succession is learnedly confuted by your

^b Acts xx. 33, 34. ⁱ Thes. ii. 5, 6, 8, 9. ⁱ Cor. ix. 12, 15, 18.

^c ⁱ Cor. ix. 11. Gal. vi. 6, 7. Phil. iv. 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.

^d *Rights of the Christian Church*, p. 336, 337. ^e ⁱ Kings i. ^f Deut. xxxiv. 9. ^g See *Jewel's Def. Apol.* Part II, p. 119,

your own Bishop *Jewel*, which will equally serve for an Answer to this Objection made against us. In Sum, he teaches us not to regard any other Succession than that of Faith and Doctrine^h, there being indeed no such uninterrupted Succession as the Papists boast of, to be found.

Remarkable are the Words of the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of *Bangor*, "That in Fact, there must have been frequent *Interruptions* in the *Succession* of the *Christian Clergy*; that the *Gospel* layeth no stress upon this Matter, but a great deal of Weight upon Things of quite another Nature; that you imitate our *first Reformers*, who scorn'd to take their *Claim* to the *Purity* of the *Gospel*, from such *Topicks*; that you do not put the Cause of the *Reformation*, and of the *Church of England*, upon such *Trifles*, but upon your own being sincerely perswaded of the *Necessity* of departing from *Those*, who had departed from God, and destroyed the whole Design of his Gospel; that God and Christ could not but approve of *Those* of the *Clergy*, who did at first, and have since, joined in it; that You cannot put either *Their*, or *Your* own, eternal Salvation, upon their *regular Ordination*, and *unbroken Succession* from the *Apostles*, because this would be to put it upon the Invention of Men, and not the Declaration of Christ; and indeed, upon what you may be very well assured never was; that though you have all Respect for what is *Fitting*, *Orderly*, and *Decent*, yet, you cannot in Conscience absolutely depend upon any *Set of Men* for the *Terms* of Salvation, whilst the *Gospel* it self lies open, without renouncing Christianity; nor expect God's *Graces*, *Benedictions*, or *Absolutions*, from any Hands, but his own, without affronting him; nor put the *eternal Happiness* of Mankind, absolutely, upon their agreeing in one *external Communion*, with any one particular Set of *Clergymen*, without the absurd Supposition, that God prefers an *Impossibility* before the truest *Sincerity* of Heartⁱ." This might be suitably applied in several Cases, but we shall only in the present Case conclude, that the Ministers of the Baptist Churches have as good a Claim to *Succession* as any other Church can pretend to.

Thirdly, "Our Church doth further appear to be a true Church of Christ by her Government.

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"The

^h *Def. Apol.* Part II. p. 110, 138, 139, &c. ⁱ *Preservative*, p. 56, 57.

Plain Reasons for a Separation

“ The true, ancient, primitive, and apostolical Govern-
 “ ment of the Church of Christ, was only spiritual; and
 “ though it was committed by Christ himself, who is the
 “ Head of the Church, to the Apostles and Bishops^k, yet
 “ those holy Men did not execute their Power so as to
 “ exclude the Presence and Consent of the People, but
 “ did bind and loose in Conjunction with the Church
 “ of God^l.

“ This Government is designed for the Honour of
 “ Christ, and the Edification of his Church.” Touching
 this Government;

1. “ By this the Offenders are shamed and reformed,
 “ 1 Cor. v. 11. 2 Thes. iii. 14, 15.

2. “ Others are warned, and the Infection of Sin pre-
 “ vented, 1 Cor. v. 6, 7. 1 Tim. v. 20.

3. “ The Innocency of Christ’s Church and Ministry is
 “ vindicated, Psal. l. 21. 1 Cor. v. 8. Eph. v. 11. 1 Tim.
 “ v. 22. Rev. ii. 2.

4. “ And hereby the Authority of Christ, in the Hands
 “ of mean Men, is declared and justified, 1 Cor. iv. 18, 19,
 “ 20, 21. 2 Cor. x. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

“ The Manner of executing this Government, is, 1. By
 “ Rebukes, Reproofs, &c. with all Long-suffering and Do-
 “ ctrine^m. 2. If that prevail not with the Offender,
 “ then he is to be withdrawn from, or held Incommuni-
 “ cableⁿ. If the Sinner be humbled, and amended, the
 “ Sin is to be remitted, and the Offender restored^o: But
 “ stubborn Sinners, and Hereticks, after the first and se-
 “ cond Admonition, are to be rejected^p.

“ And this Government is to be exercised without Par-
 “ tiality, 1 Tim. v. 21. without respect to filthy Lucre,
 “ 1 Pet. v. 2. And without Domination or Lordship,
 “ 2 Cor. i. 24. 1 Pet. v. 3.

“ Now this truly evangelical, and primitive Govern-
 “ ment of Christ’s Church, is generally observed in the
 “ baptized Churches, as may appear to any that shall in-
 “ spect the Method of our ecclesiastical Government^q.

Thus having demonstrated, that the Baptist Churches
 have the Marks of truly ancient, primitive, and apostoli-
 cal

^k Mat. xvi. 19. John xx. 21, 22, 23. 2 Cor. x. 8. xiii. 10. 1 Tim.
 i. 20. v. 17. 2 Tim. iv. 2. Tit. ii. 15. Heb. xiii. 17. ^l Mat. xviii.
 17, 18. 1 Cor. v. 3, 4, 5. 1 Tim. v. 20. ^m 2 Tim. iv. 2. Tit. i. 13.
 ii. 15. ⁿ 2 Thes. iii. 14, 15. ^o 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7, 8, 10. Gal. vi. 1.
^p Mat. xviii. 17. Tit. iii. 10. ^q Hooke’s *Apol.* p. 87, 88, 89.

cal Gathering, Constitution, and Government; I think no more need be said to prove that they are, in Deed and in Truth, according to the Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, *A true Church of Christ.*

“ Or, if what hath been said, should be thought insufficient, we could demonstrate our Church to be true by the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, in her nineteenth Article, which is this:

The visible Church of Christ is a Congregation of faithful Men; in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly administered, according to Christ's Ordinance, in all those Things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

“ Now if this be the Mark whereby to find the visible Church of Christ, it doth rather manifest our Church to be such an one, than the Church of *England*, at least in our Opinion: Because our Church consists of *faithful Men*, whether we take Faith for the Act of Believing, or for Fidelity, as it may be taken either Way, or it may include both.

1. “ We have no Infants of our Church, but Men and Women, that are capable of Believing, and do actually profess Faith.

2. “ We use a strict Discipline, so that we suffer no known Offenders to continue in our Communion, without such Reformation as God's Word requires; so that in this Sense also, ours is a *Congregation of faithful Men* ^r.

Here we may observe, that the Church is not the Building, or Place of Worship, so accounted by too many ignorant Persons; for Christ's Church does not consist of dead or senseless Materials, such as Wood, Stone, &c. but of *living Stones*, who are the Body of Christ, which are capable both of being spoke and wrote unto, and also of speaking to others ^f.

We read of a Church in a House ^t, and that Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, &c ^v. which is truly to be referr'd to the People, not the Place of Worship.

And we are fully perswaded, that the Word of God is purely preached amongst us: For as our Ministers do not mix the Word of God, or corrupt it with their own Inventions, but do aim at that sound *Manner of Preaching* which

^r Hooke's *Apol.* p. 89, 90. ^f 1 Pet. ii. 5. Col. i. 24. Mat. xviii. 17. 3 John 9. ^t 1 Cor. xvi. 19. Col. iv. 15. Philem. 2. ^v Eph. v. 25, 26, 27.

which is not with the enticing Words of Man's Wisdom, but in Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power: Studying to shew themselves approved unto God, Workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth; so we hope many are ready to testify the powerful Effects of their Ministry, who have thereby been turned from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God^w.

" And then for the due Administration of Christ's Ordinances, which they call Sacraments, to wit, Baptism
 " and the Supper of the Lord, we verily think, that we
 " are exacter than the Church of England her self. And
 " so to speak our Minds sincerely in godly Plainness, we
 " are perswaded, that their Definition of a *visible Church of*
 " *Christ*, doth rather agree to us than to them^x.

As for our religious Worship, it is our Endeavour to worship God in Spirit and in Truth, not allowing of any vain and superstitious Ceremonies, fearing we should in so doing displease God; for we know that he is a *jealous God* of his own Ways and Worship, and that 'tis in vain to worship him with *Mens Traditions*^y.

Our Prayers are not pre-composed, and put into a Form; for as *Paul* and the primitive Christians did not, so we know not what we should pray for as we ought: But the Spirit it self helpeth our Infirmities, &c^z. And as a Sense of our Wants is given us, being quickened by the Spirit, we pray with the Spirit, and with the Understanding also^a.

Our praising of God is also from an experimental Knowledge, and Sense of God's Goodness, according to *St. Paul's Rule*^b; for we conceive the true Praising of God consists not in any pre-composed Forms, but is a spiritual Exercise, perform'd with decent Expressions, according as the Mind is influenced with a grateful Sense of the divine Favours, by his Spirit, in the Discharge of that Duty.

So we conclude the Baptist Churches are conformable to Christ and his holy Apostles, in the Performance of their religious Exercises, and Worship. But here we find it objected,

" That the Baptists reject the *Lord's Prayer*, though so
 " positively enjoin'd by Christ, *Luke xi. 2.* that when we
 " pray, we should say, *Our Father*, &c.

To which we say, we do not understand that Christ intended

^w Acts xxvi. 18. ^x Hooke's *Apol.* p. 90. ^y Mat. xv. 9. Mar. vii. 7, 8, 9. ^z Rom. viii. 26. ^a 1 Cor. xiv. 15. ^b *Ibid.*

tended this Prayer should be used by all in those very prescript Words, without any Alteration, and that it should be us'd at all Times, and be all the Prayer Christ's Disciples should make at any Time upon any Occasion, which would be the Consequence of this Objection. For the Words, *When ye pray*, must be understood to refer indifferently to all Times; and that this should be all the Prayer they ought to make, on this Supposition, appears from hence, in that our Saviour delivers this Compendium of Prayer in Opposition to the vain Repetitions, and much speaking, used by the Heathen^c, which would be nothing to the Purpose, unless it be supposed, that this was to comprehend generally all their Prayers, and that they were not to use many Petitions besides this, and to add this afterwards, which of Consequence would make their Prayers longer and not shorter.

And we do not find either that the Apostles at any Time did use this Prayer, though we find them praying in other Words^d, or that your Church does confine her self to it exactly as a Prescript or set Form, since you vary from both *Matthew*, who hath it, *Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors*; and *Luke*, who saith, *Forgive us our Sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us*; but you say, *Forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us*: And you have also added many Collects and Prayers besides this, which are used in your publick Worship, as also the Doxology [*For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever*] which is not found in *Luke xi*. But to this it may be said, That the Doxology is found in *Mat. vi*. and that though you vary in Expression, yet not in Sense from the Evangelists, whose varying from one another, as also the Apostles adding other Prayers, or praying in other Words, (together with the Variety of the Saints Occasions and Conditions) is a sufficient Warrant for you to do so too. All this is granted; from whence we think it follows, That Christ never intended to tie his Disciples to the Use of those Words as a stated Form, to be used only in so many, and in those very Words and Syllables, and especially in the after Ages of the Church, as the Objection supposeth; but rather, that he intended it only as a Pattern and Direction of Prayer, and particularly to teach us, that our Prayers should be short and copious, and not drawn

^c Mat. vi. 7, 8, 9: ^d Acts iv. 24, &c. Chap. i. 14, 24. vii. 59, 60.

drawn out to too great a length by vain Repetitions. For as when our Lord sent forth his twelve Disciples to preach, saying, *The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand*^e, we are not to understand, they were to be ty'd to those very Words, and preach nothing else; so we cannot think he did any more intend to confine his Followers to these very Words and Expressions in their Prayers. And we think the Matter is well explain'd by St. Matthew, who relates the Words of our Lord thus, *After this Manner pray ye, &c.*^f Which is agreeable to our Sense and Practice, who readily grant it to be a most excellent Rule, Direction, or Platform of Prayer.

“ Another Objection we meet with is this, *Ob! say some, You may talk what you will, we must have a Care of House-Preachers; for 'tis said, Of this Sort are they which creep into Houses, and lead Captive silly Women, &c.* 2 Tim. iii. 6, 7.

There can be no Argument in this, if it be consider'd, That none are blam'd for *Preaching in Houses*, nor any where else; it being indifferent as to the Place where God is worshipped, so that it be *in Spirit and in Truth*^g. Christ himself taught on a Mountain, by the Sea-side, in a Ship, in the Synagogues, in the Temple, yea, and in a House too^h. The Apostles also preached in Housesⁱ. So that you may easily see, that 2 Tim. iii. 7. doth not concern us, nor any other that preach the Truth in Dwelling-Houses. But let us consider the Meaning of the Text.

“ *Of this Sort.*] What Sort? Why, of that Sort just before mention'd, who are describ'd in the former Part of the Chapter, even such as are *Lovers of their own selves, Covetous, Boasters, Proud, &c. having a Form of Godliness, but denying the Power thereof.* Of this Sort are they which creep into Houses, &c. And I hope it appears we are not of this Sort of People; for we allow no such Enormities amongst us.

“ *Are they which creep.*] I suppose none are so gross to imagine, that they creep on their Hands and Knees, but all that are judicious will rather think that their Creeping signifies some cunning Way of entering gradually, so as they are not discerned to be what they really are, according to Jude 4.

“ *Into*

^e Mat. x. 7. ^f Mat. vi. 9. ^g John iv. 20, 21, 23. ^h Mat. v. 1, 2. Mark ii. 13. ⁱ iv. 1, 2. Mat. iv. 23. Luke xix. 47. Mark ii. 1, 2. ^j Acts v. 42. xxviii. 30, 31.

"Into Houses.] Houses signify not Dwellings only, but Families also, and is commonly used in that Sense, as *Cornelius* feared God with all his House, that is, his Family, *Acts* x. 2. xi. 14." See also, *Acts* xvi. 34. *1 Cor.* xvi. 15. *1 Tim.* iii. 12.

"St. Paul speaks of some unruly and vain Talkers, who subvert whole Houses, teaching Things that they ought not for filthy Lucre's sake: That is, as I understand it, they, by their unruly and vain Talk, did subvert whole Households or Families, for filthy Gain. And of this Sort of Men, as I conceive, St. Paul speaks in this Place under Consideration.

"So then, creeping into Houses doth not signify preaching in Dwelling-houses, as simple People are made to believe. But the Meaning must rather be this, that some very corrupt Men, that are Lovers of their own selves, but neither love God nor their Neighbour, will nevertheless make a Shew of Religion in a ceremonious or formal Way, whilst they deny the Power of Godliness; and such evil Men, by humouring some silly Women, and flattering them in their Sins and Follies, will creep into Families, such Families no doubt, that have Riches to supply them, and Power to protect them. Do but let such Women have their Lusts and Longings, their Wishes and Desires, and then you win and captivate their Hearts; such Teachers shall be their Teachers; they will ever be learning of them, though by that Way they are never like to come to the Knowledge of the Truth, though they hear them all the Days of their Lives. Now we may consider, that silly Women love to be fine, and to be counted Fair, and Wise, and Good, and Honourable: Flattering Titles, fantastick Courtship, and trifling Compliments, please them well; Musick and Merriments win their Hearts. These are divers Lusts, by which silly Women are led captive, by such cringing, creeping, fawning, flattering Teachers, and by this Way they creep into Houses or Families. For having won the Women, the Women win their Husbands, and the Lords their Tenants, as Bishop Taylor observes, and the World's their own.

"Thus much for Creeping into Houses, which you may easily perceive, is not fitly apply'd to any that meet in private Houses to worship God (as we some-

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"times

" times do for want of better Conveniencies) so that what I
 " have said concerning our being a *True Church*, and having
 " a *True and Regular Gospel Ministry*, is not at all weakened
 " by that Objection^d.

I shall therefore now proceed to the second Part of my Task, namely, to shew the Reasonableness of our Separation.

Secondly, That it is lawful in some Cases, for such as truly fear God, to separate from some Bodies or Societies of Men, which may call themselves Christians, yea, and the only Church of Christ, can't reasonably be deny'd by your selves, because you have actually done this in separating from the Church of *Rome*, who boasteth of her being such a Church of Christ as cannot err, but neither you nor we dare believe them.

Bishop *Jewel* saith, " As touching that we have now
 " done, to depart from that Church, whose Errors were
 " proved, and made manifest to the World, which Church
 " also had already evidently departed from God's Word:
 " And yet not to depart so much from it self, as from the
 " Errors thereof, and not to do this disorderly or wicked-
 " ly, but quietly and soberly, we have done nothing
 " herein against the Doctrine, either of Christ, or of his
 " Apostles^e.

" For if they say, It is in no wise lawful for one to leave
 " the Fellowship wherein he hath been brought up, they
 " may as well in our Names, and upon our Heads, like-
 " wise condemn the Prophets, the Apostles, and Christ
 " himself. For why complain they not of this, that *Lot*
 " went quite his Way out of *Sodom*, *Abraham* out of *Caldee*,
 " the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*, *Christ* from the *Jews*, and *Paul*
 " from the *Pharisees*? For except it be possible there may
 " be a lawful Cause of Departing, we see no reason why
 " *Lot*, *Abraham*, the *Israelites*, *Christ* and *Paul*, may not be
 " accused of Sects and Seditions as well as others^f." Now
 to apply this to our Case.

We do not think the Practices of the present Church of *England* to be so agreeable to the Practice of Christ and his Apostles as it ought to be, but that in many Instances they are departed from God's Word, and therefore we also have departed, not so much from the Church it self, as
 from

^d Hooke's *Apol.* p. 91, 92, 93, 94. ^e *Def. Apol.* Part IV. p. 397.
^f *Ibid.* Part V. p. 506.

from the Errors thereof; neither have we done this disorderly, or wickedly, but quietly and soberly, and are therefore justified by your selves, That herein we have done nothing against the Doctrine, either of Christ or his Apostles.

The Baptist Churches are only and wholly for joining with primitive Christianity, and therefore find themselves under a Necessity to maintain a friendly Separation from the present Church of England, for the following Reasons.

1st. Because the Gathering and Constitution of that Church does not appear to be agreeable to the apostolical Practice, as we have shewn the Baptist Churches are, "The Church of England is a National Church, and divided into Provincial, Diocesan, and Parochial, which sort of Churches we find nothing of in the Bible. Neither can we perceive that our Saviour intended his Gospel Church should be national:" At least that it would not eventually be so, evidently appears,

(1.) In that the Disciples and Followers of Jesus are a peculiar and separate People, chosen out of the World, and redeemed from among Men^h. The Gospel rarely takes whole Families, much less whole Nations. For,

(2.) "We are taught that Christ's Doctrine should meet with great Opposition in the World, and occasion great Divisions in Nations and Families; yea, even amongst the nearest natural Relations, so that in the same Family there shall be two against three, and three against two, and a Christian Man's Foes shall be they of his own House, which would not be if whole Families, Countries and Kingdoms were join'd together in one Faith, and incorporated together in one Church, Matt. x. 34, 35, 36, 57. xxiv. 9, 14. Luke xii. 49, 51, 52, 53. John xv. 19, 20. and xvii. 14, 16. Acts ii. 40, 47. xix. 8, 9ⁱ.

(3.) Christ plainly tell us, That his Kingdom is not of this World, and therefore his Servants are not to fight; neither may they expect to reign in Peace (as might have been if Christ's Church had been National) but rather to be hated, persecuted, and put to Death, till he, the King of Saints himself comes^k.

(4.) We conceive the Foundation of this Building,
D 2 name-

^h Hooke's Apol. p. 99, 100. ^h Tit. ii. 14. ² Cor. vi. 17. John xv. 19. ⁱ 1 Pet. i. 18. Rev. xiv. 4. ⁱ Hooke's Apol. p. 100. ^k John xviii. 36. xvi. 2, 3. Luke xxii. 29, 30. Rom. viii. 17. ¹ Pet. v. 4. Mat. xxiv. 9.

namely, the bringing in of natural Infants to be Members of Christ's Church, who are not capable of the *new Birth*, or to be begotten by the *immortal Seed* of God's Word, is not consistent with the excellent State of the Gospel Church, but is contrary to these Scriptures, *Mat. iii. 8, 9, 10. 2 Cor. v. 16, 17. Gal. iii. 26, 27, 28, 29.*

And your Church does not only admit Infants to Membership by what you call Baptism, but 'tis also attended with such Circumstances, that we cannot conform to it without acting contrary to our Consciences. For,

1. When your Minister says, *I baptize thee*, when he only sprinkles or pours a little Water in the Face, however he may satisfy his own Conscience, he cannot satisfy ours that he speaks true, and we dare not prevaricate in so solemn an Undertaking, when a Thing is said to be done, which is not done, and that too *in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, which if it were done, is yet none of God's Appointment when applied to Infants, and so cannot truly on that Account neither be said to be done in his Name. But we shall have Occasion to speak more of these Things anon. 2. We cannot believe what your Church says, That by this Baptism, Children are *made Members of Christ, Children of God, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven*: Or that they are *regenerate, and born of the Spirit*. 3. We look upon your Sponsors, or God-fathers and God-mothers, to be a meer human Invention, serving the Wills and Fancies of Men, and which hath only a *Shew of Wisdom in Will-worship*¹, but is really hurtful, as it is taken (purposely to bring Infants into the Church) instead of Repentance and Faith which you acknowledge is required of Persons to be baptized. 4. You tell us these God-fathers and God-mothers do promise and vow three Things in the Child's Name. (1.) That the Infant shall *renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Pomps and Vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh*. (2.) *Believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith*. And, (3.) *Keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the Days of his Life*. Which, besides that many who pretend so to promise and vow, are altogether regardless of any such Thing, both respecting themselves and the Infant they promise for, which they take no further Care of; so no Man is able to promise and perform these Things of himself without the Grace of God, which there is no Promise

¹ Col. ii. ult.

mise of out of God's Way. 5. To add no more, We look upon your making the Sign of the Cross on the Child's Forehead, in Token, as you say, that the Child *shall not hereafter be ashamed to confess the Faith of Christ crucified*, to be also a meer human and popish Invention.

" Now, though we admit not Infants to visible Church Membership, because we find no Rule for it, yet we do not exclude them from Salvation: If they die whilst such, we are perswaded they will be Members of the invisible or catholick Church, that is, that they will be found amongst the Number of the saved; for we believe it is not the Will of our Father which is in Heaven, that one of these little Ones shall perish^m. We do not think they are in a worse Condition than the *Hebrew Infants* were with their Church Membership; for our Saviour saith, *Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven*ⁿ. Though they die unbaptized, yet they do not die unblest^o.

We are not then startled at the *Quicumq; negat parvulos, &c.* of the fifth Council of Carthage, at St. *Austin's* presiding there, nor at Mr. Owen's so readily falling in with their Doctrine (as being agreeable to what he calls a famous Declaration of your Church) viz. *That Infants are delivered from Perdition, and obtain eternal Salvation by Christian Baptism*^p: The Words of our Saviour, *That of such is the Kingdom of Heaven*, being not spoken of Baptism, but of Infants in general, though they were not baptized, appearing to us of greater Weight, and a sufficient Balance against all these.

But to conclude this first Reason, " Since we cannot find, or any ways understand, that the Gospel Church either was National in Christ's or the Apostles Days, or was to be National afterward, or can be National, by any Light we can receive from the Word of God; therefore according to the best of our Understandings, the Church of *England* is not the true Church of Christ. Therefore we find our selves concerned in Duty to God, to depart from her Communion, and walk with such a Church as is undoubtedly found in, and founded upon the Word of God^q.

2dly. " Another Cause of our friendly Separation from the Church of *England* is, we cannot be assured by any Means, that she hath true Baptism, and where this is

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^m Mat. xviii. 14. ⁿ Mat. xix. 14. ^o Hooke's *Apel.* p. 105. ^p Owen's *Lawfulness of Infant Baptism*, p. 63. ^q Hooke's *Apel.* p. 105.

“ wanting [according to your own Principles] there can
 “ be no true Church. We cannot understand that she is
 “ right, either with respect to the Subject or Manner of
 “ Administration; that is, either that Infants should be
 “ baptized, or that Sprinkling is Baptizing. We do not
 “ find it so in the Scriptures, neither do our Friends of
 “ that Church prove it to us by their Arguments. At
 “ least we do not apprehend that they prove it, and that’s
 “ the same Thing to us as if they offered no Proof at all.
 “ Either there is no Strength in their Arguments, or
 “ much Weakness in our Understandings, and which so-
 “ ever of these it is, it comes to the same Conclusion:
 “ We do not understand it. And until we can understand
 “ that they have true Baptism, we cannot account them a
 “ true Church. It’s like they think the Fault is in our
 “ Understandings, and if so, it is our Unhappiness, but
 “ we cannot help it. If their Intellectuals be strong and
 “ ours weak, they must bear with us, so far as I know,
 “ till we come to their pitch. But we think verily the
 “ Weakness is in their Arguments, that they do not prove
 “ what they bring them for, and may be answered. And
 “ the Truth is, we are very confident, that all that ever
 “ hath been urged against us, in this Case hitherto, hath
 “ been sufficiently answered already^r.

Now “ for as much as the Church of *England* professeth
 “ to baptize Infants, which we find no Directions for in
 “ the holy Scriptures, therefore we believe, that her
 “ Baptism is not true Baptism, but rather a traditional
 “ One, which she received from *Rome*, and did continue
 “ at her Reformation from Popery, verily thinking (as I
 “ suppose) that it had been right, when upon a more di-
 “ ligent Search, it cannot be found in the Word of God^s,
 no, nor in any Writings of Antiquity for about two Hun-
 dred and fifty Years after Christ, as the late Learned Dr. Gale
 has abundantly shewn in his *Reflections on Mr. Wall’s History
 of Infant Baptism*; which is confess’d also, in a great Measure,
 by Dr. Taylor, Dr. Barlow, and others of your Church;
 nay, your Church seems to confess, that it has no Founda-
 tion in Scripture, in the very Performance of that Ser-
 vice, when in the Exhortation upon the Gospel of Mark
 x. 13. the Minister saith, *Nothing doubting, but that he fa-
 vourably alloweth this charitable Work of ours.* Where ’tis to be
 noted they do not pretend to find any Precept or Prece-
 dent

^a Hooke’s *Apol.* p. 105, 106. ^r *Ibid.* p. 110.

dent for it in Scripture; but only from our Lord's Carriage towards those Infants, they would gather so much as not to doubt of his favourable Allowance (not as doing what he had required, but) as being a *charitable Work of their own*.

Notwithstanding, we find your Ministers making many Objections, and endeavouring to draw divers Arguments from the Scripture for that Practice.

Some say, that *Infants are part of the Nations which Christ commanded should be baptized*; and that *this Practice is no where forbid*. To which I answer,

That the Commission expressly requires all those who are commanded to be baptized, to be first taught. Teaching is so closely join'd to the Subject *all Nations*, that there is no separating of it, without a manifest Breach of this Order. 'Tis not then the being part of the Nations who are to be taught, but actual Teaching, and believing the Gospel, which gives a Right to Baptism, according to our Lord's Command: Which St. Mark expresseth thus; *Preach the Gospel to every Creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, &c.* And this shuts out another Pretence, *viz.* That Discipling may be taken exclusive of actual Teaching; for this plainly shews, that the only Way of Discipling or Teaching, which our Lord intended, was to be done by Preaching the Gospel.

As to its not being forbid, " This is so very trifling, " that I should not have mention'd it, were it not so " commonly us'd by the Pædobaptists. If from hence " they would only infer, that it is not unlawful to dip " and bath their Children in Water for their Health, or " upon any civil Account, this will not be denied: But if " they mean that they are not forbid in a religious Man- " ner, to baptize their Children *in the Name*, meaning in- " to the Faith, *of the Father, and of the Son, &c.* when they " have no Faith; or by the Authority *of the Father, and the " Son, &c.* who have given no such Authority; it is not " true that they are not forbid, for all Falshood is forbid. " Besides, they may upon the very same Foundation bap- " tize their Cattle too, and all their Vessels and Utensils, " which now will, doubtless, be counted a Profanation of " the Ordinance, notwithstanding we are not expressly for- " bid to do it; and as Baptism receives all its Value and " Efficacy only from the Authority and Command of the " In-

“ Institutor; not every Thing which he has not prohibited, but that only which he has expressly commanded, can be our Duty to perform, of any Advantage to us, and becoming us to do v.” There was not then, as Mr. Owen supposes w, any Necessity our Lord should tell his Disciples they should not baptize Infants, in case they were not to be baptized; but it would have been of absolute Necessity in case it had been his Will that they should be baptized, that he should somewhere or other tell them so.

But the principal Argument with which we are usually encountered, is drawn from Circumcision. For *as God has promised to be a God unto Believers and their Seed*, it is supposed they are to be received into the Church by Baptism; as they were formerly by Circumcision, Baptism coming in the room and stead of Circumcision. But the Answer to this is easy.

God did command the *Jews* to circumcise their Children, and therefore, on that Account only they were circumcised; and if he had, as if he had pleas'd he might have commanded them to be baptized under the Gospel Dispensation, then we should as readily have done it as the *Jews* circumcised them; but our Saviour not having commanded this, we have no Authority for doing of it, and dare not do it without. To say, that because Children were admitted into Covenant formerly by Circumcision, therefore they have a Right to be at present put into Covenant with God by Baptism, is at least said very arbitrarily, and without any Foundation. And if Baptism had properly come in the Room of Circumcision, it should have been administered only to the Males, and that precisely on the eighth Day, for that was the Law in that case x. And then such as had been circumcised, need not have been baptized also, as we find the converted *Jews* were y.

The Command for Circumcision, as Mr. Owen observes, was very Peremptory z; but it was not given in the Form he mentions, viz. Of Initiating their little Children, (which loose way of expressing it gives room for many groundless Fancies) but it was confin'd to the Males, and to that only Act of Circumcision; and so can be no Commission or Warrant for a Practice so differing from it as that of Infant Baptism is.

But

v Gale's *Serm.* Vol. II. p. 177. w Owen, p. 190. x Gen. xvii. 10, 12. y Acts ii. 41. z Owen, p. 62,

But I shall now take a little more particular Notice of Mr. Owen's Arguments for the Lawfulness of Infant Baptism. His main Argument is grounded on the Covenant which God made with *Abraham*; and here he offers to prove,

1. " That the Covenant which God made with *Abraham* " and his Seed, was, in Substance, the very same evangelical " Covenant which we Christians enjoy at present; with this " only Difference, that it is now more largely explain'd ^a.

To which it is sufficient to note, That the Apostle's Distinction of the two Covenants ^b no ways fits Mr. Owen's Scheme, having a plain View to the Difference between the *Jewish* and *Christian* Dispensation: For the Prophet's Words are, *Behold the Days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new Covenant with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah* ^c; which implies, that it was not then in being. And the Apostle in applying it, refers to the *Jewish* Oeconomy as the *old Covenant*, which was ready to vanish away. But were Mr. Owen's Manner of distinguishing the Covenants fully granted, and that the Covenant made with *Abraham* was indeed the same which we Christians are now under, yet is it nothing to his Purpose; because as himself tells us ^d, *The new Covenant had its Commencement soon after the Fall*, and did not begin with *Abraham*, as, or when the Ceremony of Circumcision was instituted. Therefore as the Covenant of Grace commenc'd from the first Promise which was made to *Adam* after the Fall, it had no Sign, Seal, or outward Ceremony accompanying it as such. The Seed of *Noah*, *Enoch*, &c. had no such Application made to them, neither had the Females after the Institution of Circumcision; whence 'tis justly to be inferr'd, That *positive Institutions belong to no Persons at all but those only for whom they are instituted and design'd*; and that 'tis the express Word and Command of God, and not what we may imagine results from the Nature of the Covenant, that can warrant our Practice in Things of that Nature.

2. Mr. Owen offers to prove, " That this Covenant continued in Being, and full Force, throughout the *Mosaic* Oeconomy down to our Saviour's Time, as a distinct Covenant from the Legal, &c.

It may seem from these Words, *The Law was added* ^e, and, *Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ*

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shall

* Owen, p. 11, 12. ^b Heb. viii. ^c Jer. xxxi. 31. ^d Owen, p. 12.
^e Gal. iii. 19.

shall profit you nothing: And, *he is a Debtor to do the whole Law*^f, which St. Paul delivers as his own Opinion, and not as Mr. Owen imagines^g, as arguing upon the Principles of the Judaizing Christians only; I say, it may seem from hence, that these two Covenants in the Jewish Dispensation did coalesce and unite in one; but I shall not insist upon this, for whether this be so or no, it seems to me to be of no Weight in this Case, because the Right to Circumcision, as the initiating Ceremony (as our Author will have it) did not result from the Nature of the Covenant (as is above observed) but depended wholly on the Will and Pleasure of God. Therefore,

Where our Author to establish his third Point, which is, "That Circumcision was the proper Seal, and initiatory Ordinance to the Patriarchal, or Gospel Covenant, &c. faith, When the Sacrament of Circumcision was first instituted, there was no Covenant of the Church of God in being, beside the Evangelical; no Mosaical Law on foot for four Hundred and thirty Years after; and that at the Giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, the Jews were not circumcised, nor initiated by that Ordinance into its Profession and Obedience. That that Ordinance always accompanied those who were Abraham's spiritual Seed by Calling and Profession."; it may be answered,

1. That 'tis hence evident, Circumcision did not, as to Time, run parallel with the Covenant of Grace, for our Author owns that was in Being before, yea, that it had its Commencement soon after the Fall. Therefore, as Circumcision did not begin with the Covenant of Grace, and hath actually ceased according to God's good Pleasure, under the Gospel Dispensation, it must (I think) be very Arbitrary, to call it, as some do, a Gospel Ordinance, or initiatory Seal, which as such was always to continue, at least in its Equivalent (Baptism) during the Time of the Christian Oeconomy.

2. Though the Mosaical Law was not in Being when Circumcision was first instituted, and that at the Giving of the Law they were not initiated by that Ordinance into its Obedience, yet since, as Mr. Owen himself owns, It became annex'd to the legal Covenant, as a particular Precept^h; and we are taught in the New Testament, that Circumcision was performed on the Sabbath Day, *that the Law of Moses should*

^f Gal. v. 2, 3. ^g Owen, p. 36, 37. ^h *Ibid.* p. 36;

should not be brokenⁱ, That it was a Yoke of Bondage, and is oppos'd to Gospel Liberty, Faith, and a new Creature^k: Therefore we conclude (whether primarily or secondarily it became of Use in the Law, it matters not, 'tis sufficient that) it belong'd more to the Law than the Gospel.

3. It can in no wise be granted, that Circumcision always accompanied Abraham's spiritual Seed, or that *Ishmael, Esau, and Keturah's Sons*, were by Right and Title within the Limits of the Covenant which God promis'd to establish with Abraham and his Seed, when they were circumcised; for this is plainly denied to *Ishmael*, and to all others except *Isaac*, in whom his Seed should be called, *Gen. xvii. 18, 19, 21.* Yet it will not follow from hence, that those who did not belong to this Covenant, as not being of *Isaac*, whether signed with Circumcision, as *Ishmael, Esau, Keturah's Sons*, Abraham's Household Servants or Strangers bought with Money, were, or not so signed, as all the Female Seed of Abraham, Lot and his Seed, the *Moabites* and *Ammonites*, which had not the Covenant of Circumcision given to them, must therefore be reckon'd as reprobated; Election or the Favour of God being not confin'd to that Covenant, as the same was signed by Circumcision.

Our Author himself tells us, That Female Infants were received into the Church and Covenant by a pure Act of Grace without the Seal^l: And just so we reckon Infants in general, dying in Infancy, shall be received into Heaven. But which Way were the Females received into the Church, when it is so strenuously pleaded, that this Reception was by Circumcision, the initiating Ordinance, and thereupon they found Infant Baptism, when as Females were not circumcised? Mr. Owen tells us, *In the Males, they might be reckoned as circumcised, while that Act was imputed to them^m.* But if this would do, then may the Baptism of Parents be imputed to their Children, as well as it is supposed their Faith is, and so there is no need of their Baptism, no more than there was of Female Circumcision.

4. What Text of Scripture can our Author produce that faith, Circumcision did always accompany those who were Abraham's spiritual Seed by Calling and Profession? Or, how can natural Infants be called a spiritual Seed? Our Saviour plainly tells us, *That which is born of the Flesh is Flesh, &c. John iii. 6.* But were it granted that Infants were a

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ⁱ John vii. 23.

^k Acts xv. 10. Gal. v. 16. ii. 3, 4, 5. vi. 15.

^l Owen, p. 56. ^m *Ibid.*

spiritual Seed, it must follow *Abraham's* Female Infants were so too, and yet Circumcision did not accompany them, unless it were by Imputation, which however does the Cause of Pædobaptism no Service, as before observed.

In short, we say with the Apostle, *Circumcision is nothing, and Uncircumcision is nothing, but the Keeping of the Commandments of God*ⁿ. Circumcision is nothing of it self, but as it is commanded of God; under that Consideration it is something, both with respect to the Subjects, and the Time which 'tis his Pleasure it should continue: And just so it is with Baptism, which has no real Worth when it is without the Word, or stripp'd of God's Institution.

Mr. Owen saith, "The Covenant continuing still in Force, the Change of the Seal could make no Alteration in its Terms, Nature and Contents. Christ had good Reason to change the Seal, as is obvious to all that will but consider. But no Reason had he to change the spiritual and everlasting Covenant of his Father, which he came not to cancel, but fulfil^o."

This seems not well to agree with the Practice of the Pædobaptists; for if there is no Alteration made, but only Circumcision chang'd for Baptism, then 'tis plain, they are strictly bound by the Nature and Contents of that Covenant to baptize the Males only, and that precisely on the eighth Day. But had Christ good Reason to change the Seal? Who knows then, but that he had as good Reason to change the Subjects of the Covenant, or visible Church, from *Male Infants*, to Believers both of Men and Women? Either let Christ be Lord absolutely, or not at all. If he has Power to institute Gospel Ordinances, let us hear him in all Things, as we are required^p, and not be ruled by our own Fancies. We are not to prescribe to him what we imagine to be reasonable, but his Will alone (who speaks from the Father) is a sufficient Reason for our Obedience.

And as to the Everlastingness of the Covenant, as this refers to Circumcision as a covenanting Ordinance (in which respect only it is it serves their Purpose) it cannot be understood to extend further than Circumcision it self did, that is, during the *Jewish* Oeconomy. So long, and no longer, is the word Everlasting in this respect to be extended. For so it is written, *My Covenant shall be in your Flesh for an everlasting Covenant*^q. In like manner are we to under-

ⁿ 1 Cor. vii. 19. ^o Owen, p. 47. ^p Acts iii. 32. ^q Gen. xvii. 13.

understand these Words, *And I will give unto thee, and to thy Seed after thee, the Land wherein thou art a Stranger, all the Land of Canaan, for an everlasting Possession*^r. For this extends no further, than while they should remain a People in Covenant with God, distinct from all other Nations.

It will not then follow, according to what our Author infers in his fourth Proposition, wherein he endeavours to shew, *How the Right of Infants to be admitted into the evangelical Church and Covenant by the proper Ordinance, results from the Premises*, "That those Infants of profess'd Believers, who had by God's Order a long and uninterrupted Possession of the Covenant Rights and Privileges, must have the same still^r"; for as they themselves do not conform to that Order, so we have now a special Leader and Commander, even Christ, who is the Head of the Body, the Church, by whom the Father speaks, and has given us a Charge that we hear him in all Things; and as we are now under a New and more excellent Dispensation than any which did precede it; and as the Apostle saith, *The Priesthood being changed, there is made of Necessity a Change also of the Law*^r, which must be allow'd to be true in some Respects however, concerning what is call'd the initiating Ordinance; we cannot therefore grant what our Author insists upon, "That Infants have, by God's Law and Appointment, the same original Right to the covenanting Seal, that the Seed of Abraham ever had; and so ought to be solemnly initiated into the Covenant of Grace by Christian Baptism, which (says he) succeeds Circumcision for that Purpose^v." For since the Mediator of the new and better Covenant has given us no such Intimation in his Order for Baptism, and that the Practice of the Apostles in Compliance with his Will, was only to baptize Believers, *Men and Women*, we dare not comply with a Practice so contrary to this, on the meer arbitrary Wills and Pleasures of Men.

Nor can I conceive how this Practice can be made to consist with what Mr. Owen himself writes of Baptism, viz. "That in it we put on Christ, and are made the Children of God; are incorporated into his Body, the Church; are sanctified, cleansed, and justified, by receiving Remission of Sins, which are there washed away; are dead and buried unto Sin with Christ, and with him risen again to Newness of Life; are regenerated,

" or

^r Gen. xvii. 8. ^r Owen, p. 48. ^r Heb. vii. 12. ^v Owen, p. 49.

“ or born of Water and the Spirit; are baptized into the
 “ Faith and Worship of the Holy Trinity, and thereby
 “ made Christ’s Disciples; and finally, by Baptism we are
 “ saved. *All this is certainly true, when we take the whole Ordinance together, in the outward Sign and the inward Grace. For we depend not on the Romanists Opus operatum, nor on the bare internal Incomes of Enthusiasts. God must work his Will for our Salvation in his own Way, and we must not divide and mangle his holy Ordinances in our Accounts* ^w.

Now this inward spiritual Grace, which our Author well makes a Part of the Ordinance, is what we cannot find in Scripture to be any ways applicable to Infants; for to be born of the Spirit must import some visible Fruits; so also does the Rising to a new Life; and how they are baptized into the Faith, and yet have themselves no Faith, nor are capable of it (for Faith cometh by hearing, Rom. x. 17.) is what we understand not; and therefore we cannot see how, or which way the Pædobaptists can clear themselves of that which Mr. Owen would apply to others, viz. The dividing and mangling God’s holy Ordinances.

We readily grant, that God’s Love to Infants is not in the least abated upon our Saviour’s Coming into the World, but that he retains the same gracious Inclination to them, that he had when he preached the Gospel unto Abraham ^x; only we do not with Mr. Owen, restrain it to the little Children of such Parents as are in a Covenant Relation with God, and standing in that Relation are baptized; for we conclude (as I think also our Antagonists in general do) that ’twas of unbaptized Infants our Saviour spake, when he said, *Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven* ^y, and that he thereby teaches us the happy Condition of Infants in general. And this we think is a sufficient Authority for our being so liberal in granting them Remission of Sin and eternal Salvation ^z. Nor have we less Ground for our refusing to baptize them, for though indeed that be an Action in our Power to give and grant ^a, yet it being not their Right and Due from God’s Word, we are afraid, to do it without would be Will-worship, and so Vain-worship ^b.

Here ’twould be very easy to turn Mr. Owen’s Arguments about a positive Law, against himself; but that it is too large for this Place, where it may be thought I have already exceeded my Bounds. But a little further,

Mr. Owen tells us, “ If the Infants of Christian Parents
 “ be

^w Owen, p. 52. ^x Ibid. p. 66, 67, 68. ^y Mat. xix. 14. ^z Owen, p. 69. ^a Ibid. ^b Col. ii. 23. Mat. xy. 9.

“ be not within the Covenant of Grace, they are still under the Covenant of Works; and if they be not grafted a-new into the second *Adam*, who saves all that will be saved, they abide in the Stock of the first *Adam*, who destroy’d them all by Sin, and as it were, tainted their Blood by Treason and Rebellion against God’s Majesty. Shall we then, while they remain in that State and Covenant, hope for their Salvation, which is only to be had on God’s Terms, and not on our own^c.” This he speaks to persuade us, that by Baptism the Effects of Original Sin are taken off, that thereby they are freed from eternal Punishment, and so shall be saved: Yet presently after he turns the Scales, and saith, “ But if within the Covenant of Grace they be, as undoubtedly they are, if they be in a State of Salvation, then let them not be denied God’s Seal to confirm and insure his gracious Promises^d.” Again, “ If to the Inheritance of eternal Life they have a Right by their Saviour’s Death, deny them not the external Evidence and Security^e.” And again, “ But in this Infants have a manifest Advantage, because they are guilty of no fresh, or personal Offences against God — And without Provocation given, the unchangeable God never alters his gracious Measures towards his People, so as to express Severity where he used to shew Kindness. If therefore, for their Fathers sake, and for the sake of his own Gifts and Calling, he intended to re-induce those undeserving *Jews* [referring to *Rom. xi. 26, 28, 29.*] into the Church; much more, for the same Reasons, would he retain Infants within the Church, that never offended him, since by Grace he first brought them in^f.

These contradictory Reasonings make a very uncertain Sound, and serve chiefly to shew, that our Author is resolv’d to have his Conclusion, let the Premises be what they will; for one while ’tis pleaded, Infants are to be baptized because they are *Children of Wrath*; and by and by ’tis pleaded, on the Account that they are *Citizens of Zion*, and *new Jerusalem*, that is, Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven. But if our Author should say (which I think he can hardly do) that this latter Sort of Reasoning, is only *ad Hominem*, upon our Principles, and not at all founded upon his own; then I say, this is contrary to the Faith of many of his Brethren, who from the Innocency of Babes, and

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^c Owen, p. 71. ^d *Ibid.* ^e *Ibid.* p. 72. ^f *Ibid.* p. 73.

our Lord's saying, *Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven*, plead, that seeing they have Right to the greater Blessing, they ought not to be deny'd the less. I shall only observe here, that 'tis a Symptom of a very bad Cause, That the Assertors of the Practice of Pædobaptism can no better agree in their founding of it. The Papists ground it on Tradition; and some Protestants seem to like well of that Way also, because they can't find it plainly delivered in Scripture. Some ground their Authority for it on a pretended *Jewish* Practice of initiating Profelytes by Baptism, for which they depend on the Testimony of some *Jewish Rabbins*, and their Authority is made *the true Basis of Infant Baptism* &c.

Others again are not satisfied with this, but think they must find it contain'd somewhere in the Protestants only Rule of Faith, the Scriptures. But here they are at a wonderful Loss; and some will have it that Infants have Faith either real or imputative, and so are to be baptized. Others say they are baptiz'd, because they promise Faith and Repentance by their Sureties, and so found one human Device upon another. But most who undertake to argue this Case amongst us of late, found their Argument upon *Gen. xvii.* concerning the *Abrahamical Covenant* and Circumcision; but their Methods are very various, every one almost misliking what others had drawn up before them, and so imagining to lay their Schemes on a more *firm Base*. And this we are particularly to note of Mr. Owen, who saith, "If in this Opinion I am singular, I must still
" continue of this Mind, till I see it prov'd erroneous.
" Then I promise readily to retract, and submit to the
" better Judgment of the Learned; who, as far as my
" Knowledge reaches, have *hitherto*, with little or no Ex-
" ception, gone *against me in a Body*, and cast their Schemes
" in another Model ^h." Other Places may be seen where he owns himself not well satisfied with the Management of some Pædobaptists that had handled that Matterⁱ. Such material Differences in the very Ground-work, may serve to confirm us, that the Point they so earnestly contend for, in their peculiar Methods, as every one likes best, is built on no solid Foundation. However, I shall take Notice of an Argument or two more of Mr. Owen's, and so conclude this.

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^g Dr. Hammond's *six Queries*, p. 195. *Margin*. ^h Owen, p. 28.
ⁱ Owen, p. 107, 145, 160.

He begins his new Testament Proofs with original Sin, and argues in this Manner.

That 'tis necessary for Infants to be baptized, that they may be *purified from the Filth of original Sin, and freed from its Servitude, in order to recover the Favour of God, and that they might be received into Heaven^k*. To which I answer,

1. That to suppose little Children liable to, and in Danger of eternal Punishment, for the sake of original Sin, and that they remain so, till Baptism be apply'd to them, to wash them and save them from its Guilt and Filth, is not only groundless (no such Use of Baptism being spoken of in Scripture) but 'tis also a Reflection upon the Undertaking of Christ for them, as if his Death and Blood shed were not sufficient to purge from original Sin without the Addition of Water; and also it reflects on the Wisdom, Goodness, and Faithfulness of God, who according to this is supposed to have left, and ventur'd the State of Infants in regard of their eternal Happiness or Misery, in the Hands of frail, and too often careless and irreligious Parents: And so they are expos'd a second Time to the Danger of everlasting Damnation, as well by the Carelessness or Wickedness of their immediate Parents, as by that Sin of our first Parents; neither of which was in their Power to help.

2. The Weakness of this Pretence, of Baptism's taking off the Effects of original Sin, may appear from the constant Prevailing of those Effects, as well in baptized as unbaptized Persons: For if strong Inclinations to Sin, Pain, Sickness, and Death, be the Effects of original Sin, 'tis evident, that whether Infants are baptized, or unbaptized, they are equally liable to those Evils. And as to their being cleans'd and sanctified by the Spirit and Water as join'd together, so as that thereby they are render'd pure and holy in the Sight of God, as it respects the Adult and qualified Subjects of Baptism, it is granted; but as it respects Infants, we conceive 'tis only Imagination, and that it ought first to be prov'd, that our Lord and Master has requir'd such Service, before we can draw any Conclusion about such blessed Effects.

3. There can be no just Plea for Infants Baptism, in order to their Salvation, or to free them from the condemning Effects of their Forefathers Sin; because it is the positive

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Decla-

^k Owen, p. III, III, &c.

Declaration of the Lord by the Prophet, that *the Son shall not bear the Iniquity of the Father, but the Soul that sinneth shall die*¹. And St. Paul saith, *As by the Offence of One, the Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation: Even so by the Righteousness of One, the free Gift came upon all Men to Justification of Life*^m. So that though it be true, that all Men die for that one Sin of *Adam*, which is called Original Sin, yet shall none die eternally, or be cast into Hell for that Sin; neither are the Effects, or condemning Power thereof, whatever it is, taken off by Baptism, but by the righteous Undertaking of our Lord Jesus Christ. For as in *Adam* all die, even so in *Christ* shall all be made alive.

4. Let it be remember'd, that from *Adam* to *Abraham*, there was no Ceremony instituted to seal the Covenant of Grace; neither from *Abraham* to *Christ*, with respect to Females, though certainly they lay under the same Effects of *Adam's* Sin, as the Males did, or as Infants in general do: Now if it was remitted to them without any such Ceremony, this shews, that *positive* Institutions, or Ordinances, are necessary for no Persons at all (as Mr. Owen himself acknowledgeth) beside those for whom they are instituted and designedⁿ.

Therefore, let the Effects of original Sin be what they will, unless it could be prov'd that Infant Baptism was ordained by Christ, it can be of no manner of Use or Service in this or any other Respect. For whatever is the Condition of Man in the Fall, there can be no Recovery out of it but by God's Grace, which can never be apply'd but in his own Way, and according to his own Direction. But a Direction for Infants to be baptized for this or any other End, we find not; and therefore to the Pædobaptists may fitly be apply'd these Words of our Author, "Where is their Scripture Warrant for their Doctrine? Will they forsake God's Method, to follow their own Fancies? This is not Faith, but Presumption; it is not to follow God, but to lead and teach him^o." And again, "It is not what they may hope and presume, without Promise or Scripture Authority, that we can safely rely upon, but what God has declared in his Word to be his Will. Observe his Rules they ought, and not venture to prescribe to his Justice or Mercy, what they themselves do think convenient^p,

Christ

¹ Ezek. xviii. 20. ^m Rom. v. 18. ⁿ Owen, p. 75. ^o *Ibid.* p. 118, p. 121,

Christ our great Prophet has not spoke a Syllable of it, and yet our Author saith, *No Man was so well acquainted with his heavenly Father's Will; and that, without doubt, Christ expressed his Fidelity in modelling the Christian Church according to the evangelical Pattern*^q. Why then are they not satisfied to let it remain in the same Form which he left it? Sure, they will not dare to accuse our Lord with Unfaithfulness, though he has varied from the supposed *Abrahamicall* Platform. Mr. Owen assures us, that when Christ gave forth his Commission for Baptism, he *had not then Infants in his Mind or Thoughts, but spoke only of adult Persons*^r. And since they can't make it appear, that he ever had their Baptism in his Thoughts at any other Time, nor his Apostles after him; I hope we shall be excused for refusing to give that to Infants, which Christ and his Apostles were thoughtless and silent about.

Another Argument Mr. Owen makes use of, which I would speak a little to, because it seems new to me, is taken from 1 Cor. x. 1, 2. from whence he argues, "All these (*i. e.* the little Children) as well as the Parents, were baptized unto Moses in the Cloud and in the Sea; and so became his Disciples. Then, *Ver. 11.* it is said, *Now all these Things happened unto them for Ensamples, and are written for our Admonition, upon whom the Ends of the World are come.* Therefore we are bound to receive the Admonition, and follow our Ensamples, by baptizing our Infants unto Christ, and making them his Disciples, as those Infants by Baptism were made Disciples unto Moses^s.

What I shall say to this at present, is only to shew briefly, how evidently he has perverted the Words and Sense of the Apostle in that Passage: And first it is to be noted, that St. Paul speaks not a Word about their being made Disciples unto Moses by that Baptism, but only that they (*i. e.* the Fathers) were baptized unto Moses, &c. and did all eat the same spiritual Meat, &c. But,

'Tis plain to all such as are willing to be rightly informed, and do not catch at the bare Sound of Words, without observing the Design and Intention of the Speaker, that the Apostle here does not speak of Ensamples to be followed, but only of such as were to be avoided. For having observed, that the Jews stood upon equal Terms, and enjoy'd like Privileges with the Christians, who yet fell away many of them, and perished, he saith, *Ver. 6. Now*

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these

^q Owen, p. 58. ^r *Ibid.* p. 204. ^s *Ibid.* p. 169, 170.

these Things were our Examples, to the Intent we should not lust after evil Things, as they also lusted. And Ver. 11. Now all these Things happened unto them for Ensamples, and are written for our Admonition, i. e. to warn us that we don't sin and perish like them. This then was the Design of the Apostle, and the Intention of those Ensamples, and the Judgments which happened unto them (not that they should do any Thing in Imitation of them, but) that they might be warn'd to take heed lest they should fall also. In like manner we are to understand Jude 7. where Sodom and Gomorrha are set forth for an Example, not for others to imitate, but to deter them by their Punishment from following such sinful Courses, which procur'd them such a signal and exemplary Destruction.

As to the Mode, or Manner of Baptizing, we conceive that Dipping is essential to true Baptism; and therefore, as we always administer it in that Manner, so we cannot conform to your Practice of Sprinkling, which we think deserves not the Name of Baptism, for the following Reasons,

1. All the Instances of Baptism which we have in Scripture, appear to have been done by Dipping, or Plunging under Water, and there is nothing to justify Sprinkling, or Pouring a little Water on the Party baptiz'd. Thus John baptiz'd in the River of Jordan, and in Enon, near to Salim, because there was much Water there^t.

Our Saviour was baptiz'd in Jordan; and when he was baptized, he went up straightway out of the Water^v. So, Philip and the Eunuch went both down into the Water, and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the Water, &c^w. which very plainly shews, they did not practise Sprinkling, for they need not have gone into Rivers to sprinkle; besides, 'tis called a Burial, Therefore we are buried with him by Baptism^x. Now Dipping has a plain Resemblance of a Burial, and so fitly holds forth the Person's Faith in the Death, Burial and Resurrection of Christ, which Sprinkling doth not.

2. The Word βαπτίζω from βάπτω, signifies Mergo, Immergo, to Dip, as the Learned do generally confess, and that of the Pædobaptists themselves.

Mr. Alexander Rowley saith, The native and proper Signification of the Word, is to Dip into, or Plunge under Water^y.

Dr.

^t Mat. iii. 6. John iii. 23. ^v Mat. iii. 16. ^w Acts viii. 38, 39.

^x Rom. vi. 4. Col. ii. 12. ^y Scholars Companion at the Word βαπτίζω.

Dr. Littleton translates the Word by *Mergo, Tingo*; and though he would have the latter Word to signify sprinkle as well as dip, yet as to the former Word, *Mergo*, thus he gives it in *English*, *To put under Water, (or any other liquid Thing) to sink, dip in, duck or plunge over Head and Ears; to Immerse*^a.

The proper and genuine Sense of *Βαπτίζω*, the Criticks constantly affirm (saith Dr. Gale^a) is *Immergo, Mergo, &c.* and he mentions *Constantine, Stephens, Vossius, Casaubon, Grotius, &c.* as so understanding it. "But why do I spend Time (saith he) in transcribing these Quotations, when there are such large Collections already, which render this Labour needless, — Mr. Stennet has furnish'd us with so many Instances, both ancient and modern, of this Nature, some of which are taken from the greatest Men of the Church of *England* now living, or lately dead, that he makes the Thing evident almost to Demonstration; so that I'm in no fear of being contradicted by the Learned, who acknowledge all I plead for in this Case^b."

3. The Learned of your Church likewise tell us, that 'twas the Practice of the primitive Christians, to baptize by putting the whole Body under Water.

Dr. Cave tells us, that *they baptized by Immersion (or Dipping) in Ponds and Rivers*^c.

Mr. Owen saith, *Our Church commands Dipping upon Condition, and consequently prefers it to any other Mode of Administration*^d.

And accordingly in the Order for Baptism in your Church, we find the Minister is to take the Child in his Arms, and then naming it (if they shall certify him that the Child may well endure it) he is to dip it in Water discreetly and warily: And for this End the Fonts were first set up in Parish Churches, which stand as Monuments and Witnesses of that ancient Practice now out of Use, and almost forgotten. "And what is a Font, is it not *Fons* a Fountain? And doth not that plainly shew, that People us'd formerly to be baptized in Fountains, or Places abounding with much Water? And therefore they retain'd the Name (when they deserted the Place) and made a Vessel which they call a *Font* (a Fountain) big enough to dip an Infant in^e. But

^a Dr. Littleton's Dictionary. ^a Reflect. Lett. IV. p. 132. ^b Ibid. p. 135, 136. ^c Prim. Christianity, p. 311, 320. ^d Owen, p. 10. ^e Hooke's Apol. p. 115.

But your Ministers, to justify themselves in the Use of Sprinkling instead of Dipping, which was the ancient Custom, tell us, that our Climate is too cold to dip in, and that it would endanger bodily Health, and even kill a Child, and so render them guilty of Murther, which is the Breach of the Sixth Commandment. To which we say,

1. We do not know that our Climate is colder now than it was some Ages ago, when, as Mr. Fox acknowledgeth^f, the ancient Britons baptized by Dipping. And this Mode has been used, so as to dip tender Infants in Fonts (or else sure those Vessels were useless;) and 'tis sometimes done to this Day to procure bodily Health, and therefore this is but a weak, as well as a late Objection against Dipping.

2. We understand the Greek and Russian Churches do to this Day plunge into the Water those they baptize, and deny any to be rightly baptized, who is not plunged into the Water, according to the Precept of Christ: Now 'tis well known that Russia is much more North, and the Climate much colder than ours^g; yea, so much, that Dr. Heylin tells us, the Air is so extream cold in the northern Part of it, *That Water thrown up into the Air, will turn to Ice before it fall to the Ground*^h. Consequently this can be no good Objection against Dipping.

3. And more especially, we dare not alter or change our Lord's Command, who we do not find makes any Difference between hot and cold Climates, but sends his Ministers with one Commission to Teach and Baptize all Nationsⁱ: And when this Order is duly observed (as it is in the Baptist Churches) *i. e.* first to Teach, and then to Baptize only such as are taught, there can be no Colour for this Objection, so long as Christ is with his People to maintain his own Cause in the World^k. We know of no Damage done by *this Way* of administering Christ's Ordinance, and if the Subject had not been first changed from a Believer to an Infant, they would not have been constrain'd to change Baptism or Dipping, into Rantism or Sprinkling, and then to excuse themselves plead the Coldness of the Climate; which, by the way, is a plain Acknowledgment, that they themselves who use Sprinkling, look upon Dipping to be the right and due Manner of its Performance.

Remark-

^f Mart. Vol. I. p. 109. ^g See Hooke's Apol. p. 112, 116. ^h Heylin's Cosmog. Lib. II. p. 455. ⁱ Mat. xxviii. 19. ^k Ver. 20.

Remarkable are the Words of the late Reverend Doctor *Whitby*, a learned Author of your Church, in his Annotations on *Rom. vi. 3. viz.* "It being so expressly declared here, and *Col. ii. 12.* That we are buried with Christ in Baptism, by being buried under Water; and the Argument to oblige us to Conformity to his Death, by dying to Sin, being taken hence; and this Immersion being religiously observed by all Christians for Thirteen Centuries, and approved by our Church; and the Change of it into Sprinkling, even without any Allowance from the Author of its Institution, or any Licence from any Council of the Church, being that which the Romanist still urgeth to justify his Refusal of the Cup to the Laity; it were to be wish'd that this Custom might be of general Use."

The Baptists therefore in this Case say, That "for as much as it may be very easily, and has been so often and fully proved to Demonstration, that the Word baptize signifies only to dip into the Water; that St. John, our Saviour, and his Apostles, with the whole Church, in all Places for many Ages, administered Baptism in that Manner; that the most learned Defenders of the Practice of Sprinkling, even among the Clergy of the Church of England, as well as in other Nations, do confess this, and acknowledge particularly this was the Practice of the Apostles, and primitive Churches of the first Centuries; that the learned Versions of the Scriptures translate the Word by one, which only signifies to dip; that generally the most learned and judicious Writers assert and own this Sense of the Word, and that, even in their Discourses upon this Subject, and while they are endeavouring to justify the Practice of Sprinkling: I say, seeing that all this so easily may be, and so frequently has been made out ['tis strange to us] how any Persons can prevail with themselves, notwithstanding all this, upon a bare arbitrary Supposition, that this is only a Circumstance, and of no Moment or Consequence, and without any other Authority, to make any Change and Alteration in a positive divine Institution; or how they can satisfy themselves, and answer it to their own Consciences¹.

So being perswaded in our Consciences, that the Church of England wants two Essentials of Christian Baptism, viz,

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¹ Dr. Gale's Sermons, Vol. II. p. 144.

a right Subject, and a right Manner, we therefore think she is not such a Church of Christ as she has her self described in her Nineteenth Article, as we observ'd before; and therefore believe it to be our Duty to leave her Communion, and join our selves to such a Church as we are satisfied has lawful Baptism.

Mr. Owen, indeed, thinks this Difference between us is not a sufficient Ground of Separation, because if we would go to them we might be gratified in this Particular. *For our Church* (saith he) *commands Dipping upon Condition, and consequently prefers it to any other Mode of Administration^m.* But seeing she only prefers this in Word, and makes no Conscience to practise accordingly, but has laid it aside; supposing she would gratify us so far, as occasionally to alter her fixed Method, yet this will not give us Satisfaction; for as it is a Case of Conscience to us, we cannot join with such a Church that makes it so very indifferent, and can alter and change the Form of Gospel Institutions at pleasure.

3. Another Cause of our friendly Separation from the Church of *England*, is, not only because we cannot find such Officers in God's Word as we find in that Church; as namely, "*Lord Primates, Arch-Bishops, Provincial-Bishops, Diocesan-Bishops, Suffragan-Bishops, Arch-Deacons, Sub-Deacons, Deans, Parsons, Vicars, Curates, &cⁿ.*" But also, and more especially, because we conceive your Ministers too generally want those Qualifications which ought necessarily to be found in the Ministers of Christ, as is acknowledged by the late Reverend Bishop *Burnet*, whose Words are these:

" Our Ember Weeks [that is, when Preachers are ordain'd by the Bishops] are the Grief and Burden of my Life: The much greater Part of those who come to be ordain'd, are Ignorant to a Degree not to be apprehended by those who are not oblig'd to know it: The easiest Part of Knowledge, is that to which they are the greatest Strangers: I mean the plainest Parts of the Scriptures, which they say in Excuse of this Ignorance, that their Tutors in the University never mentioned the Reading of them: So that they can give no Account, or at least but a very imperfect One, of the Contents even of the Gospels. Those who have read some
" few

^m Owen, p. 9, 10. ⁿ Hooke's *Apol.* p. 117.

“ few Books, yet never seem to have read the Scriptures :
 “ Many cannot give a tolerable Account, even of the *Cate-*
 “ *chism* it self, how short and plain soever : They cry
 “ and think it a sad Disgrace to be deny’d Orders, though
 “ the Ignorance of some is such, that in a well regulated
 “ State of Things, they would appear not Knowing
 “ enough to be admitted to the holy Sacrament; this
 “ does often tear my Heart. The Case is not much bet-
 “ ter in many, who having got into Orders, come for In-
 “ stitution, and cannot make it appear that they have read
 “ the Scriptures, or any one good Book, since they were
 “ ordained°.

This Complaint of the Bishop, as it discovers his own particular Zeal (who was an excellent Light in his Day, and many such would have been a great Glory to that Church) so is it sufficient to demonstrate that our Scruples about your Ministers have a just Foundation; and that the Baptists are not to be blamed for refusing to follow such Guides in Religion, as have not read, much less understood the Gospel; and who therefore have more need to be taught themselves, than they are fit to teach others.

4. Another Thing with which we are griev’d, and cannot conform to with a good Conscience, is the Multitude of *Ceremonies* us’d in the Church of *England*, which though they confess them to be indifferent in their own Nature, yet do they impose them, and strictly require a Conformity to them. Such are the Liturgy, set Forms of Prayer, the formal Administration of the Sacraments, the Sign of the Cross in Baptism, Kneeling at the Communion, the Surplice, Bowing to the Altar, and at the Name of Jesus, the Form of Burying Service promiscuously used at the Funerals of good or bad Persons; and many more which I forbear to mention. These Things, it is plain, came from *Rome*, and were retained by your Church at the Reformation: And as those Ceremonies which the Papists used, were a Burden to the first Reformers, and therefore they rejected them, so those which remain, and are impos’d under a Pretence of *Decency and Order*, without any Word of God to warrant them, are grievous to the Dissenters, and what they cannot with a good Conscience conform unto.

Therefore though your Church has cut off many of
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° *New Preface to the Pastoral Care*, p. 5, 6;

those vain and superfluous Ceremonies wherewith Mens Consciences were encumber'd, yet seeing she retains *some others* (as Bishop Jewel acknowledgeth^v) which were not delivered from the Apostles, and which we think are not only *unprofitable*, but *superstitious*, and *defiling* to that plain and pure Worship which God accepteth, and which the primitive Christians performed; we dare not conform to them, notwithstanding the Pretence of Decency and Order, for fear we should be *reproved* for making *Additions to his Word*: For if God should say concerning these Ceremonies, *Who hath required this at your Hands*^q, we know not how we could answer him without accusing our selves. For that Text, *Let all Things be done decently, and in order*^r, is urg'd by the Papists to establish the whole popish Service, and Ceremonies of the Church of Rome, and may equally serve the Turns of any Societies, that can but fancy their own Inventions in the Worship of God to be comely and decent; and the more pompous and gay it is, the more it is like to please, which may tend to send such to Rome again: But in our Opinions nothing is more *decent*, or *comely* and *orderly*, than to keep as close as we can to the Rules prescribed to us in the Gospel, in the Performance of our religious Worship, without any Mixture of our own or other Mens.

5. The fifth and last Reason which I shall mention, of our friendly Separation from the Church of *England*, is her great Deficiency in Gospel Discipline, of which I have spoken before, and shewn that the same is carefully observed in the Baptist Churches. But we cannot see that there is any such Thing in your Church; for instead of executing Discipline where the Offence is committed, in the Congregation before all the People, to reclaim the Offender, and warn others, it must be prosecuted in the *Spiritual Court* only, as it is called, which even in the Opinion of the Vulgar little deserves that Name; and this is commonly many Miles distant from the Place where the Offence was committed, and the Officers of this Court usually are Strangers to the Circumstances, which often extenuate or aggravate the Offence, save only as they are inform'd by Persons which too often, through Prejudice or Ill-will, give in a wrong Information; by which Means, and

^v Def. Apol. Part II. p. 291, 292.

^q Prov. xxx. 6.

Isa. i. 12.

^r 1 Cor. xiv. 10.

and by bribing of Officers, Justice is perverted, and Persons wronged in their Estates; but we cannot see there is any Reformation of Manners wrought, Offenders reclaimed, or Sinners converted from their evil Ways by the *Spiritual Courts*: For when any of your Church Members swear, lie, scoff, rail, or be drunk, speak filthily, or live lewdly, as too many do (the more is the pity) they are generally suffered to go on in their evil Courses without Rebuke, except sometimes, when some prejudic'd Persons (perhaps as bad as themselves) shall prosecute them from some corrupt and evil Motive. Nay, it is hardly imagined by the People, that these Courts are designed to convert them from their Sins; but rather to get their Money; so that such Discipline rather hardens the Offender than reforms him.

On the contrary, the Discipline of Christ, is a Discipline of Righteousness and Mercy, for the Reforming of Manners, and Restoring of Peace and Concord; agreeable to these Words of Moses, *Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thine Heart: Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy Neighbour, and not suffer Sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any Grudge against the Children of thy People, but thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self*. This we should be glad to see used in the Church of England; for we had much rather see her reformed in all Things according to God's Word, than unvailed and exposed to Shame; and therefore I shall not enlarge on these Things, which too justly render your Church Discipline contemptible to such as walk Disorderly, and have need of spiritual Correction; it being sufficient to our Purpose, that so much may be said as will justify the peaceable Separation of the Baptists from the Communion of your Church, who her self confesseth in the Book of Common Prayer, that she wants that godly Discipline which was used in the primitive Church, and wishes the same might be again restored^t. And we wish it might be so too.

" From what hath been said upon this Head, respecting Separation, it may be seen, It is neither wilful
" Stubbornness, nor inconsiderate Rashness, that makes
" us stand off from the Communion of the Church of Eng-
" land, but the true Fear of God, and a sincere De-
" fire to worship him aright, according to his own

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" Word,

^f Lev. xix. 17, 18. ^t Beginning of the Communion.

" Word, join'd with a true Love to our Neighbour.

" Neither do we maintain our Separation, or promote our Principles in a turbulent Manner, or in any unfriendly Way, but peaceably. Propagate them we ought—by the Grace of God, to the uttermost of our Power; not by Fire and Sword, but *by the Word of Truth, by the Power of God, by the Armour of Righteousness,* &c.^v" 2 Cor. vi. 7. x. 4.

And now we would have you consider, That we are not such a People as we are commonly reported to be, *Seditious, Hereticks, or Schismaticks*, but your Fellow-Natives, Neighbours and Friends, and more than that, *real Christians*. We are not, nor can be, guilty of Schism in our peaceable Separation from your Church, which hath so manifestly departed, and derogated from the Rules of primitive Christianity, as has been noted in several Cases. We own the Scriptures of Truth to be a compleat and perfect Rule; and with Mr. *Chillingworth* we can't find any Rest for the Soles of our Feet but upon this Rock only: For as he well saith, " There are Popes against Popes, Councils against Councils, some Fathers against others, and the same Fathers against themselves; a Consent of the Fathers of one Age against the Consent of the Fathers of another Age; the Church of one Age against the Church of another Age; in a Word (saith he) there is no sufficient Certainty but of the Scriptures only for any considering Man to build upon."^w For as to the Doctrine of the Fathers so called, and by some too much depended on, " There hath been such trimming, correcting, and corrupting of Books, by the Papists, for five or six Hundred Years last past, *that hath made the Faith of all Books, and all Authors, justly to be suspected. As for the Writings of the Fathers, they have been so corrupted by the Intermixture of Hereticks, so many false Books put forth in their Names, so many of their Writings lost, that would more clearly have explicated their Sense, and at last an open Profession made, and a Trade of making the Fathers speak, not what themselves thought, but what other Men pleased, that we have no Certainty of the Doctrines and Practices of the ancient Church, by any Thing that we read in them.* There is

^v Hooke's *Apology*, p. 124.
Numb. 56.

^w *Religion of Protestants*, Chap. 6.

" is not any one of the Fathers who is esteemed Author
 " of any considerable Number of Books, that hath esca-
 " ped untouched^x." Therefore we dare not make these,
 but the Scriptures themselves the only Rule of our Faith
 and Practice. And according to this Rule, when any pro-
 fessing Faith, and manifesting Fruits meet for Repentance,
 desire to be admitted Members of our Societies, then
 they are baptized *in the Name of the Father, and of the Son,
 and of the Holy Ghost*, and so they are added to the Church,
 according to the apostolical Practice. Our beginning
 Principles are six, namely, Repentance from dead Works,
 Faith towards God, the Doctrine of Baptisms, Laying on
 of Hands, the Resurrection of the Dead, and eternal Judg-
 ment^y. When this good Foundation is laid, then we are
 taught how we should go on to Perfection, by adding to
 Faith, Virtue; to Virtue, Knowledge; to Knowledge,
 Temperance; to Temperance, Patience; to Patience,
 Godliness; to Godliness, Brotherly-kindness; and to
 Brotherly-kindness, Charity; and observing all other
 Things whatsoever Christ hath commanded^z.

If these Things be in us and abound, we grow to be strong,
 understanding, and well-established Christians, such as
 shall never fall, but so continuing shall certainly enter in-
 to the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus
 Christ. Thus we begin well, and such as *give all Diligence*
 to go on well, will certainly end well, though some, in-
 deed, do not hold out to the End, but fail, and fall and
 perish. But by this it is manifest we are upon a good
 Foundation, and have as fair a Claim to that honourable
 Title, CHRISTIAN, as any People in the World.

Besides, it is well known that we pray zealously for
 the good of the whole Nation, and in particular for our
 Governors, the King and the Queen's Majesties, and the
 whole Royal Family; and we bless God, for that he
 hath put it into their Hearts to give us Peace, and Liber-
 ty to worship God according to our own Consciences. And
 we reckon we are as hearty Friends to the present Estab-
 lishment and Government as any; and are not hurtful or
 spiteful to our Neighbours, but are desirous to do good,
 and as much as possible, *to live peaceably with all Men*.

We

^x Hooke's *Apol.* p. 66. for which he quotes Bishop Taylor's *Polemical Discourses*, p. 1009, 1010, 1011. ^y Heb. vi. 1, 2. ^z 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7. Mat. xxviii. 20.

We do not hate, or despise, or magnify our selves against such Christians as we are separated from, or rather, who are separated from some Gospel Truth, and from us. We do not imagine, that our selves only shall be saved, and all others damned. 'Tis popish Doctrine, that out of their Church there is no Salvation; but such Doctrine we disown. We dare not enter into the Secrets of God's righteous Judgment. We think your Church ventures too far in this Case, in her *Quicumque vult*, or *Athanasian Creed*, where delivering the most abstruse and difficult Points concerning the Trinity, which very few rightly understand, and many doubt of, yet it is usher'd in after this manner, "Whosoever will be saved; before
 "all Things it is necessary that he hold the Catholick
 "Faith, Which Faith, except every one do keep whole
 "and undefiled; without Doubt he shall perish everlastingly." This we think is very severe and unreasonable, to require such a Faith as absolutely necessary to the Salvation of the meanest and simplest Christian, which even the most Learned of them can hardly comprehend. This sure is to make the Way to Life straiter and narrower than ever our Lord intended it should be. We do not therefore like to find Persons censorious, and forward in judging the final Conditions of any, as believing it belongs to God only, and not to any mortal Man.

And now to conclude, having shewn you the good Constitution of the Baptist Churches, and the Agreeableness of their Principles and Practices to true primitive Christianity; and also the just Causes of their friendly and peaceable Separation from the Church of England; I would only further advise every Person, seriously, and in the Fear of God, to consider these Things, and to inspect, and look into the Grounds of their own Principles; to renounce their Errors, and whatever they find to be Truth to embrace it readily, and receive it in Love as from the God of Truth. Let none think it sufficient to walk in the Way they have been brought up in, without due Examination and Trial. We must remember, that Christ is *the Way, and the Truth, and the Life*: That he ought to reign over us, and be our Leader and Commander: That we should own no other Father or Master in Matters of Religion, Faith and Conscience, but he: That *the Word*
 which

which he hath spoken, the same shall judge us all in the last Day^a.

And that therefore, we should make it our principal Care to follow him as perfectly as we can, and not to be bias'd by the nearest Relations, nor by the rich and powerful, or such who are our greatest Benefactors, for we ought to shew more Love to Christ than to all or any of these. And thus having made the wisest Choice for our selves that we are capable of, and counted the Cost of our Religion, we are to go on, bringing forth Fruit with Patience, not judging, or censuring others who cannot be of our Mind, but leaving them to the Lord, who knows their Hearts and Capacities, their Strength and Weaknesses, the Power and Impression which every Truth hath upon their Understandings, the Advantages or Disadvantages they may be under, the Means which he hath afforded, whereby those who are in Darkness may recover themselves, and awake that Christ may give them Light^b.

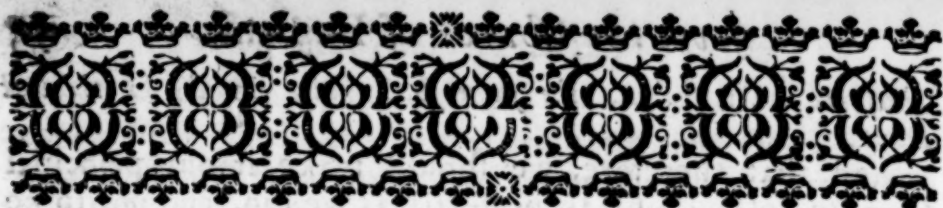
All this, I say, and every Thing else which may either lessen or aggravate the Guilt of those who do not walk in all Truth so perfectly as they should, is known to God, who will make all proper Allowances, and without respect of Persons judge according to every Man's Work.

To whom be Glory, both now and for ever. *Amen.*

Farewel.

^a John xiv. 6. Luke xix. 27. Isa. lv. 4. Mat. xxiii. 8, 9, 10. John xii. 48. ^b Eph. v. 14.





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